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THE ART OF MAURICE BARING

by Frank C. Hanighen

THE art of Maurice Baring is catholic in the widest sense of the word. It moves through both Time and Space. It appeals to those whose prosaic lives require a romantic imaginatory nourishment, a world of princesses and lords; it fascinates those whose familiarity with that world has bred in them an appreciative disillusion. Critics of such widely differing cultures as Edmond Jaloux and L. P. Jacks admire it. Such divergent personalities as Cardinal Hayes and George Jean Nathan express their delighted approval. Perhaps the churchman finds his delectation in Baring's excursions into Time—as in his recent study of Mary Queen of Scots. It is manifest that the critic loves his discriminating familiarity with the fair cities and civilizations of the world.

Maurice Baring is an Englishman; but through his truly international spirit he transcends all narrowly national categories. He loves the Roman Campagna no less than his England. One hero's childhood in Normandy is painted with just as much love and veracity as another's upbringing in Kent. One protagonist is a dragoman in Constantinople, another a correspondent in Vladivostok. Perhaps Baring's appreciation of such varying countries is imperceptibly merged with his love for their great artists and their literatures. His memories of Paris seem associated with this or that performance of Bernhardt, his Florence with the Divine Comedy.

Baring's long career as diplomat, war correspondent, traveller, and student has supplied him with a varied background for his novels; as well as with a rich store of experience for his occasional volumes of reminiscence, of which his new book, *Lost Lectures* (Knopf. $3.00), is an example. It is chiefly of the diplomatic world that he writes. Chance, which novelists evoke so often, seems to shuffle his characters very naturally through the orders of the Foreign Office. Lovers say goodbye on their respective ways to Oslo, Pekin, or Petrograd. Those who are not in service but whose wealth confers on them equally attractive if necessary duties retreat from trying situations by

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obeying the call of Baden or the moors. It is certainly a world to exacerbate the sensibilities of a Michael Gold.

It is an exalted, glamorous world; yet it is freed from the taint of snobbery or artificiality by the author's unassailable sincerity and miraculous sobriety of style. His stories deal with highly sensitive creatures, often brilliantly endowed with intellectual abilities, who despite their gifts come to nothing. He describes the crushing of these individuals by the strong organization of family and social life; he follows the labyrinthine paths of sentimental love, the complex sensitivity of love among the sophisticated and cultured. And this complex world is re-created in a simple, matter-of-fact style, at times almost monotonous, but nevertheless always captivating by its verity and unpretentiousness.

In *C*, one of the most important of his novels, all these themes receive attention. "C" is a young man of marked literary predilections and of an ardent sentimental nature. An early romance with a beautiful young girl is stifled by family, social, and religious forces. His literary aspirations are unsatisfied because of similarly strong family opposition. In all these encounters with adversity "C" reacts in a manner suggesting extreme weakness of character. It is a tribute to the fineness of the author's art that one finally realizes that "C" is really being perverse in the face of life's perverseness. He abruptly abandons literary pursuits for diplomacy, and then abandons diplomacy because of an *affaire de coeur*. He also rejects an excellent opportunity as a foreign correspondent so as to be near a capricious and jealous married woman whom he loves and who intermittently feels affection for him. The story of his life is not only the tragedy of family life but also the tragedy of the wastage of natural gifts and worldly opportunities, all for *ille Lesbia*. He dies at an early age, apparently as a result of his disappointment in love.

Baring displays no bitterness at this oppressive fabric of social life, at the tyrannies which class and social snobbery impose on those none too well equipped to defy them. He is simply content to state the circumstances, to evoke the tears in such things. He cannot find it possible within the limits of his art, like Sheila Kaye-Smith, to make of social environment a distinct entity in a novel, a veritable villain, and he cannot let his characters seek a Canaan in some extra-social milieu. In that he seems a fatalist. Nor is he bitter, inimical towards such environment like François Mauriac, whose *Family* is a corrosive commentary on the institution. To the contrary he seems to enjoy tracing the filaments of the web which encloses the victim.

In truth, this picture of an environment is one of the principal charms of his work. His characters grow out of it and derive nourishment from it to the increase of their clearness and vitality. One has the impression that he is being escorted through late Victorian and Edwardian society by an informative and cultured habitué of that society. It possesses none of the false gloss and snobbery for which Michael Arlen deserves the title of "a butler in literature". Baring quite evidently belongs. Also, he builds up his settings without recourse to satire, epigram, or innuendo; he simply sets down laconically the social data in a manner which achieves its ends without straining or pretentiousness.

A lifelong and amorous acquaintance with the literatures of the modern and ancient worlds provides a cultural background for his work. One of the delights of reading Baring is the encounters with dear bookish

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allusions, surprising quotations and fascinating discussions of art or philosophy. Without the blemishes of smartness or affected digression, these seem but the natural accompaniment of the highly civilized characters and their cosmos.

In the long list of Baring's works, one finds a mysterious title *Algæ*, published many years ago. It is a collection of favourite quotations from Russian, French, English, Italian, German, Spanish, Latin, and Greek which, outside of illustrating the author's stupendous erudition, bears evidence to his extraordinary good taste. This great storehouse of knowledge has been made use of in two books of fantasy, *Dead Letters* and *Lost Diaries*, in which he makes Washington live by humorous extracts from a diary, and excites a belated sympathy for Lear's daughters by confecting a letter from Goneril to Regan.

To the devotees of Baring, this book of quotations is supererogatory, for throughout his work there are numerous literary embellishments which charm without detracting from the narration. One finds with delight a rare but beautiful sentence from Sir Thomas Browne, an *aperçu* on French verse not ordinarily expressed by critics, a tribute long overdue to the susurrant beauty of Maupassant's prose. Hear a character in *C*:—

> "C" quoted a phrase from Pater's *Renaissance*. "Sticky, sickly stuff," said Burstall. "It's like the paste on a wedding cake. You can digest it now all right, just as schoolboys can eat ices without stopping, but there is no life in it and no rhythm. It is a mosaic, a pattern of different-coloured woods. Prose ought to be alive with rhythm, however simple or however complicated it may be. . . . [In Pater there is] no rhythm at all, no play of life, no bones and no flesh and blood. It's all sugar and patchouli—decadent stuff. When you're as old as I am, Pater will make you vomit."

This aspect of Baring's work, his love for the world of books and art, for exotic and historical places, bursts into its finest flower in *Tinker's Leave*. Among his novels, ordinarily so long and leisurely, this one comes as a *tour de force*. He takes a young man raised and sheltered among the most strict conventions of English social life and transports him by a series of ingeniously fabricated events into Russia at the time of the Japanese war, among a polyglot group of war correspondents and camp followers in Vladivostok.

Russia is for Baring a place as romantic as it was for Hugh Walpole. Yet his version of the characteristics of that people lies midway between the youthfully enthusiastic admiration of the author of *The Dark Forest* and the humorous disillusion of William Gerhardi. *Tinker's Leave* has little in common with the latter's Chekhovian *Futility*. It sketches rapidly but firmly several Russian types and then plunges into its best pages in the chapter where a truly international exchange of views on every subject under the sun is held by a group of Russian, Italian, English, German, and American journalists. Of course the dialogue is packed with witty and spirited criticism of life and literature.

The short swift traject of this story is unusual among Baring's impressive row of long, detailed novels. In most of them he is conscientiously careful to observe all the stages of his protagonist's evolution with the progressive climaxes and anti-climaxes of each revelatory episode, all bathed in a soft atmosphere of social amenities and graces—the painter of the *haut monde* in sepia, it seems. Hear the author speak of his craft:—

> It is a story. It is a true story. The main facts, strange facts, improbable facts, are all true; even the frame, the setting, is near the truth, although I invented it. You can find the story in the old

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files of a newspaper; but in turning the true story into fiction, I had to attenuate the facts, to foreshorten, to lessen, to diminish, to tone down; because what is true in life is not necessarily true in art—the old tag about *le vrai et le vraisemblable*—and to give to fiction the appearance of reality, to make the reader swallow it, you must needs temper the powder of fact with the jam of (relative) probability. The reader could not have swallowed the crude improbable facts of this tale neat and undiluted from the glass of fiction—he would have said they were impossible; so I have toned down the truth, and in a way spoilt the story and made another.

This is in the preface to *Cat's Cradle*, the longest and most finished of the novels. It vies with *C* in its scrupulously comprehensive treatment of the life of the principal character. The Princess Blanche, much as in the case of "C", is made by her father to give up her early romance with a British officer and to contract a family-arranged marriage with an Italian nobleman. She is a beautiful, enigmatic figure—a Florentine portrait with all the wilful charm of those pictures. Her unhappiness with the Italian, her abortive affairs with various suitors, her marriage with an English Lord after the death of her first husband, and her complex devotion to him which matures in a high spirit of renunciation of love and life is all admirably followed. I think that Baring has done in this something similar to what Bennett sought to do in *Old Wives' Tale*—to evoke the pathos of the life of a beautiful woman.

Cat's Cradle is more perfect technically than *C*. It is a straightforward story done without recourse to the oblique methods of narration employed in the latter novel. In perusing *C*, one is surprised to find the story buttressed with an outworn device: a preface purporting to be from the hand of one of the characters who explains that he is the author of this story of "C"—a superfluous stratagem, for the novel is well able to stand without it. Perhaps Baring's exaggerated sense of what he calls "the crude improbable facts" led him to employ this. We find a similar but subtler method in *The Coat Without Seam*. The Coat is the same Coat which the soldiers took from the body of Christ and which is passed from age to age, from hand to hand. Its story is interwoven with the career of Christopher Trevena, dragoman, newspaper correspondent, and scholar, with some anecdote of the Coat coming to Trevena's attention through the media of old letters, legends, or incunabula at every critical period of his life. In this case, so varied and exotic are the different phases of the hero's life that the device seems harmonious, although here again the tale is convincing without it.

It is this saturation in the golden treasury of Western literature which constitutes probably the greatest charm of Baring's work; and so apt is the author in enlisting it that one almost overlooks the fact that it is derivative. Dialogues concerning art and letters enhance the atmosphere and supply passing entertainment besides. Indeed so immersed is the author in his literary passions that he adopts their syllables for the purposes of his craft. Thus the Elizabethan "It's many miles to Mantua, just a little further than the end of this mad world" follows "C" like a *petite phrase* and finally epitomizes his death struggle. Also, in *The Coat Without Seam*, the catharsis of the story seems best summed up in an allusion to that moment when Faust, dying, saw some people labouring to dike the sea from their land and so understood that life was worth living. Another example is that of the character who, mourning for a lost love as he sits near a fort and watches a sentinel pace to and fro, recalls Heine's poem about a similar situation and prays

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that the soldier may level his musket and shoot him through the heart. So poignant are these allusions that they throw a brilliant reflected glamour over the scenes and the reader is likely to forget that it is only reflected.

None of Baring's characters has any positive forcefulness of character, flame of ambition, or practical vigour. They are all "weak", as the world would say, or, to paraphrase Dostoievsky, they seek not millions but the answer to their emotional problems. They all seem delicately predisposed to the malady of love, and its ravages leave them with uncicatrizable lesions. Almost pathologically sensitive—a true haemophilia of love—all these creatures really die of love's contusions. "C" expires young, "his life dead"; Trevena, his career ended at thirty-three, seeks death in battle; and the Princess Blanche with her still glowing beauty, unable to win the desires of her heart, falls from life before her prime.

The mortality of these tender characters is intimately connected with religion. Baring is a Roman Catholic and has related in *The Puppet Show of Memory* the details of his conversion. Most of his work displays a preoccupation with the problems of Catholicism. But it is not the bitter dolorism, the reaction from harsh sensuality, which stamps the work of the Catholic François Mauriac. Nor do these predilections bear any marked similarity to the happy, transcendental Catholicism of Sheila Kaye-Smith. Baring's is rather a renunciation compounded of his worship of tradition and ritual and his experience of life and literature—a gentle, sad resignation.

Fanny Weston in *Daphne Adeane* is about to be united with her lover in marriage. Her husband, whom she had ceased to love and who was believed to have been killed in battle, returns suddenly. Fanny, after listening to some spiritual homilies from her confessor, gives up her active happiness for her husband's sake—a gesture that seems less convincing than the spiritual history of Princess Blanche. The latter, through living in Catholic countries and absorbing the influence of the Church in its inter-relation with the life of these countries, gains a substratum of sympathy for the Church. She is converted after her disappointment with her marriage. Later her youth and beauty rebel and she lives only for her love affair with another man. She is re-converted when she puts her love for him above her own selfish, vain love.

It is perhaps inevitable that this devotional character of Baring's work should have a supernatural overtone. In his long, serious novels this is barely adumbrated. In a short novel, such as that pastel-like *When They Love*, he employs it to make more vivid a woman, a sort of counterpart to Princess Blanche, whose evolution the shortness of the novel prevents him from comprehensively describing. And in the short stories he gives it full scope. Baring's is not the sly, modernized fairy-tale art of E. M. Forster with its celestial omnibuses and socio-satirical intent. Not satire but a sense of wonder—a hint that all things are not explainable by science and modern thought—informs these fascinating little tales. In *Orpheus in Mayfair* and some of the stories of *Half-A-Minute's Silence* this spirit is best exemplified.

What modern writer is more productive or more versatile? The list of Baring's works is tremendous and includes novels, essays, critiques, anthologies, travel, poems, and plays. Few people know that he is perhaps the only English author who visited this country, gave no lectures, and wrote a book of unreserved admiration for our land. While

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his poetry is too allusive and scholarly to possess much originality, his comedies are as fresh as one could want. Whoever has read *His Majesty's Embassy* and laughed over the antics of the attachés will acknowledge the potency of his humour. As for his books on Russian literature, they are standard and authoritative.

Was it Baring's absorption in the problems of Catholicism that led him to describe the England of Mary Stuart? In any case, he had come to the task of the historical novel in his customary effective manner. *Robert Peckham* demonstrated that he could give an air of *vraisemblance* to the spiritual and amorous life of personages of another age. The treatment of a sixteenth-century hero as if he had emotional processes and a psychology similar to those of the present day may be poor history but it is good fiction. I know of no other novel of this *genre*, save perhaps Ford Madox Ford's *Henry the VII*, which does as well.

That a gentleman of the times of the Tudors should die not from rapiers or the rack but from nostalgia and love frustration is both novel and refreshing. Besides, Baring surrounds his characters with an environment described in his customary laconic manner and just as effectively done as in his novels of the Mauve Decade. Even so accomplished an historical re-creator as Willa Cather could learn much from his casual but convincing treatment of historical characters.

It is this artless presentation of his personages which is at its best in his most recent book of this kind, *In My End Is My Beginning*. The story of Mary Queen of Scots is told by her four Maids of Honour, and through their accounts—each written in the crude style of old diaries and chronicles—the fascinating personality of the Queen emerges. Never in any of his previous writings has the author reached a point where his bare, inelaborate approach to his characters creates such a vivid informality. His rich learning and culture enable him to frame the story and his wide experience and sympathy to motivate the drama. This book marks not only a summit in his historical work but also a high and illuminating point in his long series of novels. It brings out the full effect of his artlessness which is the best revelation of the power of his art.

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THE POETIC PROCESS FROM THE INSIDE

by William Ellery Leonard

THERE is a traditional opinion that the poetic process is something everlastingly miraculous, a notion fostered by the poets themselves. The ancients bade the muse to do the versifying; and Emerson, the modern, said "I like my verses best because it is not I that made them". And several of a number of contemporary German poets, replying to a questionnaire sent out by an ingenious psychologist at Munich, became characteristically indignant at the imputation that they knew what they were doing. Nor have other poets, in their few scattered accounts of their processes, given the critical student much help. The young Coleridge in his *Dejection: an Ode*—a poem which, for perfectly gorgeous description of cloud and storm and the aching living heart of man and the energies of the imagination on the alert, has no parallel even in Coleridge himself—laments the complete loss of all creative energy: his "shaping power of imagination". He is of course paradoxically borrowing memories of a prior listless state in a very lively moment that denies that state by the very creative power to describe both the state and the splendorous world to which it fails to awake. It will be remembered that here Coleridge makes joy the essential principle of the creative imagination; this too he denies in the mood of the poem. Why the poetic energy may lapse, as it ultimately did in the older Coleridge, or manifest itself only in rare and intense intervals as in Housman, is beyond the scope of this paper; but this I will say, that when it is present it is essentially *energy*, not joy, as both this *Ode* and *A Shropshire Lad* may remind us.

Energy: being preternaturally alive in the five senses, in ideas, in emotions whether of joy, hope, sorrow, indignation, resolve. Hopeless grief or any other situation that takes *all* the life out of one is, as Mrs. Browning said, passionless, *i.e.*, without energy,—and, she added, speechless, quite speechless. Joy may be one phase of energy in creating a poem, as in some of Goethe's lyrics and in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas; but it is oftener a result of the creation: the poets Tennyson in *In Memoriam*, Meredith in *Modern Love*, were not aroused by joy; but, in the successful employment of great energy, intellectually controlled, they must have experienced that feeling of purposeful and triumphant vitality, in harmony with their personalities and with their ideals of human life, which alone gives the word joy its one highest human meaning. So, on the other hand, I suppose the most exact psychological negative to such joy is to be *blocked*, for whatever reasons without or within, when one has the *energy* to create and can't bring the creation to pass. The state is not despair or listlessness or surrender; but desperate misery, thrashing about, restive poignancy of pain. Such a gestation period has preceded many a great poem: Wordsworth (as in *The Prelude*) and others have referred to it. Coleridge has another account of the poetic process: he dreamed a poem, which he started to

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write down on awaking, when "he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock". The account is doubtless correct as far as it goes—but how little that was has been shown by Mr. Lowes in his brilliant study, already a classic, *The Road to Xanadu*. The question was still: why the dream? The episode, however, is valuable in literary history as the clearest example on record of the poetic process as essentially subconscious, just as Goethe's analytic comments are the clearest critical testimony.

But the most explicit account by a poet of the poetic process is of course that of Poe on *The Raven*: how he figured it all out, quite rationally, quite consciously, beforehand—just what was the most sorrowful and what the most uncanny combination of situations and just how to render them mortally convincing. Critics have long since explained Poe's essay as either downright spoofing, intentional fooling of others, instigated both by his desire to shock received opinion and by that peculiarly cool intellectual talent in his make-up, revealed in his analytic tales and in his interest in ciphers, in such contrast to his poetic gift; or as a quite sincere fooling of himself by the process now known as rationalization—in old days called afterthoughts. I don't think either explanation is psychologically exact, though either may well contain an element of truth. The central truth was, however, presumably as follows: Poe had been brooding over some ideas—obviously characteristic of his dominating ideas and moods through life, as reiterated in his prose and his other verse. These ideas began to organize themselves *intellectually* in his subconsciousness, like a mathematician's subconscious beginnings of a solution of a problem in calculus; and at the same time began to organize themselves *artistically* as fragments of image, narrative, and cadence. I stress the temporal moment—"began to"—as also the causal moment: the moment when he began to write, that is, to work out the intellectual organization in terms of the artistic; and causal in two senses—as psychological urge from behind and as creative project ahead. Either during the writing, or after the completion of the poem—he himself could not, in all likelihood, have told just when—he became aware, as critic and analyst, of what he was striving for and how the effects were produced. But his analysis was not mere afterthoughts, without significance in the actual composition: his analysis, quite unbeknown to himself, was due to a welling up into consciousness of precisely what had been going on during the period of brooding. His subconscious creative energies thus appeared finally in consciousness, and articulate before the world, in two forms: (1) in the form of the organized work of art itself, the drama, the music; (2) in the form of organized explications of the brooding process—that is, explanatory ideas not read into his poetic processes afterwards, but directly stimulated by the still active reverberations of subconscious thinking. In spite of its superficial psychology, Poe is nearer the truth than the popular opinion that such a highly organized poem was the product of a drunken debauch.

Of recent years, the psychologists, especially the psycho-analysts, have contributed to the problem of the poetic process. Their formula is that the poetic process is, specifically, an escape from reality. I have no reason today to repudiate a marginal note of mine (quoted in Taylor and Culler's monograph on *The Locomotive God*, in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Oct.–Dec., 1929), made long ago to an article by Professor Jacobs on *The Psychology of Poetic Talent*. Professor Jacobs had stated that "because the artist is usually by tempera-

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ment unfitted to enjoy even a tolerable degree of satisfaction in the world as it exists, he is forced to create through his imagination an environment suited to him, an environment in which he can find, if not contentment, at least a normal mode of release for his energies". My note said: "This holds only of a certain type—the type that is dissatisfied to the point of rejection: another type abounds in and through reality, takes reality to himself, clasps, loves, interprets the life of reality. . . . Professor Jacobs has failed to note the basic, general, human insights of the poet . . . and he has failed to note his function as giving *new life* to common experience and to old ideas". To which I would now add that this is the type that has given us the great poems in all languages. The former is normal only for immaturity. What remoulding of the world nearer to the heart's desire one may think he finds in the great poems turns out to be mainly the elimination of irrelevant detail, and the correlations of cause and effect with more vivid definition—that is, an imaginative *clarification* of reality, not an imaginative *escape* from reality.

I have been speaking about others' reports of the poetic process, with critical clues furnished me by introspection. In reporting on my own mind and history, my first testimony would be on what I do not understand. I look back and realize that I started to make verses, impelled by several quite obvious motives: (1) by pleasure in manipulating words and phrases, merely a more complex form of a child's fun in talking; (2) by vanity, desire to be thought a bright boy by my schoolmates and to be distinguished as a bard in manhood; and (3) by self-identification with a favourite author, as so thrilled by his words that I tried to be him. But all this implies a prior set toward poetic activity. And what does that mean? My mother wrote a good deal of verse, on the back porch or in the back parlour of the old homestead, during my childhood: had this created the set? I am not so sure as the psycho-analysts or the behaviourists would be. I used to see her with pencil and pad; and I used to read her verses in print (some of them about me); and I had small conscious interest, rather indifference, or the same juvenile contempt I had for her botanizing.

To this the canny psychologist might reply: "Your own versifying was subconscious rivalry, your very contempt revealing your jealousy". Upon which will occur to anyone but a doctrinaire the question: "Why didn't the rivalry, with its equal contempt, make him a botanist?" I think that initial set remains; and that whatever relation it has to my mother is hereditary, not environmental —that I got from her something which, combined with other inherited qualities, would have enabled me to carry out further than she the activities of the poet, even if she had died at my birth . . . and not only this last autumn. One might find this inborn set in my early childhood so devoted to making things—building blocks into houses, chiselling out toy boats and rigging their decks. But there was nothing here different from the manipulatory activities of any restive planning child. I interested my elders then as an incipient engineer; they thought I would become a builder of bridges. Why did such creative energies as I had turn me by my middle teens to poem-builder? I can't get behind the simple statement as old as Horace: I was born that way. Except to add that it was certainly puberty that awakened the latent poet in me, as it awakened the latent sex.

To adolescent idealism, thrills in the presence of nature and in the contemplation of human history, awe before the mystery of

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the world, expanding feelings of my own personal powers—to these common factors there seems to have been supplied, as all-important differentiating factors, a greater sensitiveness to verbal expression—felt first most poignantly in our Virgil class, as recounted long after in a poem called *The Dawn*—and an absorbing urge to put ideas about life together rather than blocks and girders; though long before puberty the set toward life and talk had unawares been gaining over these blocks and these girders. And creative energy directed toward talk about life means directly or indirectly talk about one's own life, what values one gets out of experience or puts into experience.

I still think of poetry as impassioned and effective talk, though to define adequately the words "impassioned" and "effective" would make a long chapter. When my friend comes back from a walk in the warm May twilight, along the lake under the trees glittering with raindrops in the sunset, and, meeting me, begins to pour out his own exaltation in the experience, is he not creating a poem? His talk reveals the two moments that make a poem: the moment of communication to others, the double moment of reminiscence and self-clarification—of fixating the experience for himself. The moment of communication reminds us that really vital talk is propaganda, that poetry is propaganda, that, indeed, all art is propaganda—though not all propaganda is art. Communicating a vision of any sort means an exigent craving to have that vision prevail among men.

Why does one artist turn to paint, another to words? And why does one of those who turn to words write a novel, and another a poem? There may be casual and external factors in early childhood and in adolescence, but I think it is, again, the inexplicable set: the differentiated make-up to be found even in a litter of puppies, as any dog-fancier can tell you. Psychologists sometimes need reminding that even a conditioned reflex is conditioned by the organism itself quite as much as by the stimulus. The poet, more than the novelist, seizes upon the moment in any experience that contains the most, the pregnant point of it all. The poet's satisfactions in putting experience into words, into talk, are achieved far more intensely by ordered sound values, rhythm and sonority, by symbolic substitution, and by verbal condensation—a suggestible potency in one musical word after another or one musical line after another to fixate for himself and to touch off for others a whole world of thoughts and things. The poet, as distinct from the novelist, loves magical phrases—he glories in incantations. And this concentration of creative energy manifests itself not only in the power of the incantations, but in the emotional tension, at once more brief and more acute than the novelist's, whereby the incantations are produced.

But what goes on when the poet chooses one theme rather than another, or one metre or stanza rather than another? It is easier to tell what doesn't go on. He doesn't choose his theme: his theme comes. To be sure, literary history is full of accounts of poets choosing their themes, and indeed after discarding many tentative choices. Themes chosen in the way one chooses, for instance, to address an audience on one topic rather than another, actuated by considerations of timeliness, or character of the audience, or vanity, never result in a great poem—look again into Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. Themes chosen after brooding, in recurrent states of restlessness, are simply the emerging into consciousness of the gestations of subconscious powers, memories, and impulses that make him what

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he is or has become, and that differentiate this poet, in character, in experiences, and in evaluations, from some other poet. The themes he discarded were simply false alarms, partially alien, but containing, doubtless, elements ultimately identical with the ultimate theme: compare Milton's earlier recorded list with *Paradise Lost*. But my own experience leads me to believe that usually the theme simply comes, with imperious clarity, so to say choosing its poet, even as *Faust* chose the young Goethe. Byron says he chose Don Juan; but that was merely a manner of speaking: the theme was the completion of the long implicit Byron.

The antecedent state may appear in consciousness vaguely as a mood, as a picture, or fragments of a picture, as a direct memory, or as a feeling of something half-remembered or of something strangely desirable, as half-realized verbal melodies, as a premonition of creative power, or as something in itself far more intellectual—an ethical maxim, a conceptual suggestion soliciting an ethical or dramatic situation. I literally found myself writing the *Lynching Bee* before I knew it. The antecedent states had evidently not been incipient creative processes at all, but year-long meditations on the horrors of the World War, on the phenomena of lynching, on the Negro race, combining with subconscious memories of childhood terrors not consciously associated with the poem till I had clinically explored, several years later, my infantile experience. But suddenly something organized itself inside me and called for instant expression.

I keep returning to the unknown. What happened: what is organization? I know only that organization, subconscious linking of ideas, of emotional tensions, of imagery, of memories, into one whole—essentially an intellectual, rational, meaningful whole—is the outstanding difference as result between the splurge and sputter of adolescent versifying and a mature poet's work; and that this difference comes not by calculation but in the immediacy of composition itself—though of course the organization works itself out consciously in the midst of many false moves.

A vital part of this organization is the so-called form. The poet doesn't choose his metre, either. The theme is as much the form as it is the substance. Probably the moment when the subconscious organization has taken shape really means *taken verbal shape*; that is, become associated, in the specific psychological sense, with a given mode and pattern of expression; and this is the moment when one is overwhelmed with the urge to write; that is, to work it all out. To be sure, literary anecdote records both theme and form as something deliberately chosen: as when Keats and Hunt *decided* to write in rivalry each a sonnet on a grasshopper. Poets can of course play with their gifts as well as other people. And here they were playing with form, rather than grasshoppers, both of them at the time (as we know biographically) having the sonnet form dominating their subconscious and itself urging the content. And here is possibly a clue to the initial urge in other and far greater poems in the world: that is, the initial stir may be insistent verbal and musical structure seeking theme as well as theme seeking verbal and musical structure.

A note further on form. I recall the bewilderment of a psychologist that his poet-friend had talked along in an extended narrative poem more or less as easily as he himself talked to his class, unhampered by the form. A poet's initial set for manipulating speech, with the long years of practice in given forms —here again the sonnet-form—doubtless results in a control of a more difficult structure,

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and satisfactions in a more difficult structure, than extempore prose-speech, more complicated, as in patterns of regularized rhythms and recurrent sounds, and as in more massive units involved with the conventional norms of prose syntax. But the difference is less than our psychologist was aware of: in ordinary speech we have developed, all of us, an astounding dexterity in phrasal organization, even to musical cadences, and rattle along true to form and usually quite unconscious of form. What we can call the poet's grammar is nearer to good extemporary prose, in point of complexity, than such prose is to the rudimentarily articulated grammar of a child.

Does form, something in outline fairly fixed, ever modify the poet's imagery or the points he would make? Does rhyme, for instance, hamper the thought, as Milton said, or itself sometimes, as Mr. Lowes suggests, stimulate to an apposite image or point? It may do either. The psychic mechanism of even a great poet has its fits and starts. What happy strokes may be credited to the need of a rhyme must remain guesswork, unless the poet choose to tell—and even he may not know. But we can observe the frustrations. We have all read forced rhymes in *Endymion*, have seen fragments of Shelley with the last part of the line a blank awaiting a cadence to be rounded out by a rhyme. My own testimony would be that, when the poet is driving ahead, he is as little conscious of form, either as an embarrassment or as directive urge, of the metre, the alliterations, the rhyme, the cadences, as such, as is an excited orator in a vigorous flowing platform appeal. He is aware of the effects, and whether they satisfy him or not; but not aware of what produces them, except in retrospective analysis. Certainly what scientific equipment I have as metrist, phonetician, or philologist has never played any conscious part in my verse-makings, though I assume it has played a subconscious part. And even by later analysis I have seldom been able to say whether an idea and an image suggested the rhyme, or the rhyme the idea and image; and, when I have been able, it has been noticeably in cases when neither was satisfying. And in moments when I have halted, I have halted far less as constricted by specific poetic form than as blurred in vision and as blocked in expression. It does remain true that a good poem isn't put together but grows together,—and by subconscious processes as yet unexplained, except in a few *aperçus*. In general, whereas creative pressure is released in that moment when the issues have begun to take specific musical form, the form in turn continually stirs the poet to the evolution and exploitation of the issues that summoned it in the beginning—a reminder, again, that they are organically one.

Mr. Lowes has traced in Coleridge's reading many items that seem to have fused subconsciously into the images and purposes of his famous poems; in the nature of things, he could not trace out items in the man's daily experience which must have contributed something, we can never know just what—perhaps less, though, in the bookish Coleridge, bookish with such imaginative alertness, than in most poets. I have done incidentally for my own poems something of what Mr. Lowes did for Coleridge's. During the year-long probings described in *The Locomotive God*, I was startled again and again by revived memories, often from early childhood, that thereupon immediately became linked in consciousness with an image or an idea in one or another of my poems, producing an overwhelming feeling of causal connection: "O that was what I meant in that line"—"So that was the origin of that

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image". Now and then, but far more rarely, would I light on something reminiscent of my reading, though it has been both varied and intensive. The proof of the connection I found in this overwhelming feeling of recognition and discovery—I should say recovery. For instance, in a poem on the Quaker Meeting House, as symbolically contrasted with the army barracks, is a line about how it stands so quiet and eloquently plain,

With shingle-siding in the setting sun.

And a little below, the lines

You cannot guess how beautiful it seems:
Above the Capitol and marble dome,
Above the spired Cathedral and its dreams,
Unto the way-worn sons of men it gleams
Far down the Land-Marks to the ocean streams,
With windows burning like the Fires of Home.

One night, in hypnoidal consciousness, these lines, composed several years before, popped into my head just after I'd recalled a certain Quaker meeting-house of my earliest childhood, along with the associated recall of the passage in *Beowulf* describing the Hall Heorot shining over the lands. The subconsciousness is indifferent to span of space or lapse of time. So too I have recognized that lines about the sky or the woods had got what freshness they had, not from the particular sky or woods consciously in mind, but from the subconscious reverberations of the fresh new life of forgotten childhood.

Thus I am reminded of the strange and exalted union of man and of child that in the most literal psychological sense must characterize the poet, in proportion as he is truly the poet. He must be most richly the mature man in range, organization, and interpretation of experience, and most abundantly the mature master of communication; but he must remain withal the child—the child, as preserving in the midst of the social patterns of reaction-behaviour, including speech-behaviour, the child's free and naïve immediacy in responses to experience and in phrasing that experience, and the child's thrill and wonder in the presence of a world forever fresh—whose infinite variety age indeed cannot wither nor custom stale. You remember how Wordsworth, who lamented so often the lost glow—in such glowing imagery—was himself the one who said his man's heart leapt up when he beheld a rainbow in the sky. And apparently too the poet is, of all men, the character-type in whom most insistently reverberates in the mature subconscious, both activating it and activated by it, in facile interplay, the specific buried memories and moods of the child, of the little child. This psychological preservation in the poet's subconsciousness of specific experiences of his childhood is to be clearly distinguished from his preservation of the child's mode of reaction to his experience in maturity; but the phenomena are surely related. Together they complete a truth long felt before modern analysis:

The poet hath the child's sight in his breast
And sees all new: what oftenest he has viewed
He views with the first glory.

I find myself quoting again from Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Mrs. Browning was not always the good poet; but she was gifted to see and to say many good things about the good poet.

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PSEUDO-SOPHISTICATES

by Louise Maunsell Field

All that glitters is not gold. The moon is not made of green cheese. And never since the world began has crying for that decorative but notoriously inconstant luminary brought it into anyone's possession.

With these facts and others like them, genuine sophisticates, to use the term in that modern sense which divorces it from its Greek origin, are intimately acquainted. So very intimately acquainted that they have long since ceased to think about them, any more than they think about the wetness of rain or the dryness of sand. They may and usually do reveal their knowledge, but never does it occur to them to vaunt it as something exceptional, nor to proclaim the familiar truths at the tops of their lungs. Your genuine sophisticate may agree with Robert Browning that this world is "a world distraught", where there is more of sorrow than of joy, but while he does not ignore what is ugly in life, neither does he dwell upon it for its own sake. He knows too much to be astonished at the quirks and twists which give irony to that most amusing yet most tragic drama, the human comedy. Most important of all, his knowledge has become a part of his very blood and bone. It endows him with a sense of proportion which prevents him from rushing to hysterical extremes. Well aware that the human species is far from being completely angelic, he is equally well aware that it is by no means completely beastly.

But real sophisticates are few and rare compared with the pseudo variety. These latter produce a very large proportion of our fiction, drama, and other imaginative or would-be imaginative entertainment. Half-baked themselves, they frequently become the idols of the not yet quarter-browned.

For convenience's sake, let us divide them into three classes, though these are so far from being distinct that they frequently overlap. First, there are the conscientious, those serious souls to whom the inedibility, not to mention the unattainability of the moon has come as a profound and heart-stirring shock. Among them are to be found many victims of our system of so-called education, which by endeavouring to cram a quart of information into a half-pint mind frequently results not in mental nourishment but in acute indigestion. To the conscientious pseudo-sophisticate, who is usually quite honestly unaware that he is anything except the genuine article, the uselessness of crying for the moon seems a novel and a startling tragedy. Forthwith he proceeds to cover reams of good paper with the agonies of the misunderstood and the disillusioned whose troubles are in fact frequently due to that disease inelegantly known as swelled head. The disappointing and the vile things in life, which the true sophisticate sees in at least an approximately just relation to the whole, and presents without undue fuss or parade, appear to the representative of the pseudo-variety as not only of overwhelming im-

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portance but of amazing novelty. Feeling that he has made a great if terrible discovery, he proclaims their existence at the top of his lungs, via his typewriter. How frightful is the fate of man, man to whom the moon is both inedible and unattainable!

Often the pseudo-sophisticate succeeds in attracting a good deal of attention. The present-day reading and play-going public, thanks to our public schools and public libraries, is largely composed of persons suffering from great quantities of unassimilated information, or else painfully and humbly aware of a mental vacuum they strive to fill with whatever may be at hand. They are entirely and pathetically ready to believe anything that is told them if only it is told often enough and emphatically enough; especially if it is often and emphatically told in print. When the pseudo-sophisticate author solemnly announces that he and he alone has made the soul-stirring discovery that the moon is not composed of green cheese, the public is often entirely ready to take his word for it, and all the readier when, as frequently happens, he chances to have some talent for stating his case. Perfect platitudes, solemnly propounded, are thus accepted as utterances indicating profound wisdom, supreme and perfect sophistication.

Witness that much-lauded person, Sherwood Anderson. Mr. Anderson once made the apparently novel and astonishing discovery that most people, at various times and on various occasions, take off their clothes! Ecstatically seizing upon this undeniable fact he forthwith wrote a novel, several of whose incidents, and whose principal event as well, centered about the complete removal of clothing. That the spectacle of a middle-aged manufacturer of ice machines prancing about his room and delivering certainly lengthy, supposedly philosophical orations to his wife and daughter while in a state of total nudity was ludicrous rather than impressive seems never to have occurred to this naïve individual nor, for that matter, to any of his fairly numerous admirers. The pseudo-sophisticate is usually quite devoid of a sense of humour. Of course he may enjoy, and sometimes even produce, slapstick farce, but that is an altogether different matter.

Another outstanding and exceedingly serious pseudo-sophisticate is Sinclair Lewis. Mr. Lewis arrived at the startling conclusion that a small Middle Western town is neither the chosen abode of culture nor a place whose inhabitants are all flawless exponents of sweetness and light. These amazing facts he announced loudly, even vociferously, to the intense delight of many who had but recently plucked up courage enough to admit that even their own home town might have its defects, and of others who would never have been iconoclastic enough to suggest such a thing had not *Main Street* made contempt for the small town fashionable. The sweeping-condemnation formula having proved successful, Mr. Lewis went on to apply it to business men, doctors, ministers, and a few other people.

An even more solemn pseudo-sophisticate is Charles Norris, whose specialty is propounding platitudes and then twisting them into demonstrations of his pet theories. His novel *Seed* contains many undeniable facts; for instance, that the parents of an only child are in the perilous situation of having all their eggs in one basket, and that half a dozen small children are not only expensive but noisy. Yet in the interests of his own ideas of morality Mr. Norris does not hesitate to ignore both facts and probabilities, turning by main force a supposedly charming, intelligent woman into a vulgar shrew. Another of the fraternity is Gertrude Ather-

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ton whose *Black Oxen* made the term "sophisticate" popular. Her marvellously endowed heroines, particularly those supposed to belong to ancient Greece, are all ideal suffrage leaders of the enthusiastic pre-War period, ready to march on Washington at less than a moment's notice. Their ideas and ideals, their impeccable righteousness and enormous intellectual superiority to the adoring males who surround them—witness Mrs. Atherton's Aspasia composing speeches for Pericles!—make them admirable exponents of the extreme feminist ideal of the days when some were innocent enough to believe that woman's vote would purify politics.

Approximately, but only approximately, of this same type is Joseph Hergesheimer. Having learned of the existence of nymphomania and the sexual vagaries which sometimes afflict ill-balanced middle age, Mr. Hergesheimer wished to use his knowledge yet apparently found himself somewhat embarrassed, not to say abashed. Many English and American writers are subject to this inconvenient kind of self-consciousness whenever they try to deal with anything they consider daring or *risqué*. Seeking refuge beneath some sort of protective covering, Mr. Hergesheimer clutched at an elaborate symbolism of dolls and French evening gowns, held firmly within a framework of richly enamelled prose. Yet even a jewel-encrusted style cannot save him at times from being unintentionally humorous, a fact sufficiently demonstrated by the worthy gentleman whose dissertations upon the world in general so impressed the wearer of *The Party Dress* that she fell in love with him—possibly the only instance of the kind on record.

But there are other, far more objectionable types of pseudo-sophisticate than these well-meaning representatives of a no less well-meaning multitude. Most offensive of all, perhaps, is the variety represented by those writers who, having acquired some smattering of information in regard to certain forms of sexual abnormality, drag it wholesale and unashamedly into their books, smirking complacently over their knowledge of facts familiar to everyone who has any acquaintance with the literature of the ancient world. This type reminds one of nothing so much as the small boy who, having learned some dirty word known but never used by his elders, sniggers as he chalks it over the barn door. Yet its representatives proclaim and often believe themselves sophisticates *par excellence*. These abnormality-mongers, by dragging into their books some incident such as the one Rosamond Lehmann forced into *Dusty Answer*, have to a great extent superseded those who made it a point of honour to stage at least one scene of every novel they wrote in a house of ill-fame, described to the last most pitiably disgusting detail. That neither the plot nor the characters of the story rendered such a scene necessary or even advisable made no smallest difference. It was hauled in, firmly and ruthlessly, that it might endorse the author's claim to complete sophistication.

Another even larger and scarcely less objectionable variety of pseudo-sophisticate is the contemptuous, who preach and practise the gospel of the sneer. This is one of the easiest and since the War has become one of the most popular methods of asserting that superiority which is the goal of every pseudo-sophisticate. The advantages of this particular method are many and manifest. Take patriotism, for instance, regarded as a virtue ever since man had anything in the way of tribe or country to be patriotic about. It is today the target for the cheapest ridicule of the pseudo-sophisticates. Now to be in any degree a real patriot may involve you in all

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sorts of difficulties, may subject you to actual hardship, may even cost you money. At the very least it demands some slight sacrifice of time and convenience, such as registering and going to the polls on election day. But to scoff at patriotism demands nothing at all in time of peace, and, though conscientious objectors may not have been completely happy during the World War, even jail was a good deal less uncomfortable than the trenches. To do your duty, whether it be to your parents, your country or your conscience, may be exceedingly difficult and even more unpleasant. But to call duty bunk or piffle is not only an excellent excuse for saving yourself trouble; it is often financially profitable, being warmly endorsed by the many who are not at all anxious to take any trouble whatsoever for anything or anybody but themselves. Snicker at chastity, loyalty, duty, or that "absurd fetish" called honour, and you will find plenty of alibi-seekers only too ready to snicker with you. It is a great deal easier to jeer at heroism than it is to be heroic.

Since in sober fact it is only a step from the sublime to the ridiculous, there is nothing simpler than so to travesty sublimity as to make it seem absurd. John Erskine has conclusively proved how profitable it can be, financially, at least, to take some noble story or heroic character, some masterpiece of beauty that has for ages been one of mankind's cherished possessions, and by twisting and distorting it, win the applause, not only of the foolish, the ignoble, and the pseudo-sophisticates, but even of a number who ought to know better and often do, but are afraid not to laugh at whatever may seem to entertain others. It is only Royalty that can say quietly "We are not amused" at what seems side-splitting to the majority. There are many who enjoy nothing so much as ridiculing, or hearing others ridicule, whatever is above and beyond their powers of appreciation. That in the endeavour to cheapen they merely betray their own inherent cheapness is something they have not wit enough to understand. Fortunately, this formula lacks variety and soon becomes tiresome. But the spirit of which it is an extreme example not only persists, but has for the past few years dominated both literature and the stage. The hatred of sentimentality engendered by the World War has brought about a contempt for sentiment. Bitterly disappointed in their hopes of a new and better world, many of the more emotional find relief in laughing, somewhat hysterically, at any suggestion of possible improvement. For these there can be only sympathy. But hard on their heels swarm a multitude of those whose laughter is quite empty, the silly giggle of the moron. The more foolish these titterers, the more firmly they are convinced of their own intellectual superiority.

So many and so persistent are these sneer-lovers that the very word "ideal" has fallen into disrepute. Few modern authors dare to depict a man inspired by love of country, or a woman who is at once intelligent, attractive, honest, and virtuous. Even Ellen Glasgow clearly implied in *They Stooped To Folly* that no woman, or at any rate no Southern woman, can possibly contrive to be both chaste and charming. Popular admiration for the pseudo-sophisticates is so great that they are influencing, consciously or unconsciously, all save those few writers who, like J. B. Priestley, dare to be out of the fashion.

Hand in hand with this fondness for sneering at all that has, since the days of the great Negative Confession, been regarded as of lasting value, goes a despair of life. Aldous Huxley has here set the pace. Many are his

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followers, most of whom apparently imagine that their pessimism is not only a mark of sophistication but also something peculiarly modern. "The gentle man perishes, the bold-faced goes everywhere. . . . He of the peaceful face is wretched, the good is disregarded in every place. . . . There are no righteous, the land is left to those who do iniquity." In substance, that might be a quotation from any one of a dozen or more present-day writers; it was written over four thousand years ago.

Perhaps one reason for the present prevalence of the pseudo-sophisticates is to be found in the self-expression theory. Brought up by parents who, having themselves been over-disciplined, worshipped freedom as the one great good, many are both amazed and outraged at discovering that they cannot get the moon by crying for it. The undisciplined child, accustomed to having only what it likes and doing only what it likes, develops into the young man or woman who is not merely astonished but bitterly aggrieved to find that life consists largely in doing those things you do not want to do, and that the moon pays no attention to wailings. It is only the exceptional who can emerge from a youth devoid of mental, moral, or emotional discipline without any taint of the pseudo-sophistication now all but epidemic. Yet to the more optimistic, foreshadowings of change have for some time been visible.

Several of the pseudo-sophisticates mentioned, and others too numerous to mention, are losing something of their prestige. Many outstanding fictional successes of today are the work of genuine, not pseudo-, sophisticates. While the solemn proclaimers of platitudes, the astonished discoverers of the inedibility of the moon, will no doubt always be acclaimed by the naïve and the quarter-educated, revolt against the dogma of the sneer is already well under way, while the despair produced by unsuccessful crying for the "maiden with white fire laden" is beginning to awaken only that sort of pity which is a good deal more closely related to contempt than it is to love. The pseudo-sophisticates we will probably have always with us; we can at least be thankful that their reign shows signs of drawing to a close.

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THE PLAGIARIZED DUST-JACKET

WITH FURTHER NOTES ON "THE OTHER SIDE OF AUTHORSHIP"

by Osbert Burdett

In January 1925, on my way back from Rome, I broke the journey at Nice in order to avail myself of Frank Harris's kind invitation to meet him. His stylistically often revolting and substantially questionable *My Life and Loves* was then about to appear, if appearance be the right word for a book that had to be printed in Germany, was defaced by wretched illustrations, was promptly banned from almost all countries including England and America, and gave Harris great difficulty in its dissemination. At that time I did not know about this book and wished to talk with him about a project of my own. A London publisher was debating the idea of my writing a small work on Frank Harris's writings and, since he wished Harris's approval, had sent to Cimiez, where Harris continued to live until his death, one of my previously published books. The point of the anecdote which is to follow, however, concerns not the matter of this book—*The Idea of Coventry Patmore* had been chosen, because Harris himself had written an essay on that exquisite and neglected poet—but its size (a crown octavo, about nine by five) and more particularly its dust-jacket.

But let me first describe my visit and my man. Harris made himself very hospitable during my brief stay and constantly invited me over from the hotel to lunch or to dine or to drive to Cannes with him. His talk consisted mostly of stories of celebrities in literature and music: Pater, Beardsley, Carlyle (of course!) were among the names I remember, but some of these tales were already familiar to any reader of Harris's volumes of *Contemporary Portraits*. Unless memory is deceptive, not very much was actually said about my projected book upon himself (though, as will be seen, he had examined the Coventry Patmore book very carefully); and indeed when almost a year later I published a short study of his writings in my *Critical Essays*, he made it honestly clear that he did not care for it.

At this point the reader may like to be reminded of three of Harris's eventually predominating notions. One was just; namely that since the time when reading ceased to be the reward of special aptitude and scholarship, written English had become emasculated; that, in fact, the idiom of modern literature was as skimmed milk compared to the idiom of Shakespeare and of the seventeenth-century prose writers up to the death of Queen Anne. The second notion was that the pristine vigour and frank virility of English must be restored by a violent reaction from politeness of word, from vulgarity of euphemism, and from democratic sentimentalism and feebleness. The third was that he, Harris, was the man to achieve this task because he was combative, courageous, and, in literature, shame-free to an exceptional degree. I should add that he held these notions (or so I fancy) for a personal reason: a reason connected with his literary

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ambition and the disappointing reception accorded his two studies of Shakespeare—*The Man Shakespeare & His Tragic Life Story* and its sequel *The Women of Shakespeare*; for upon them, one fancies, he must have built high hopes.

Now both these books are worth reading. Harris had an extraordinary knowledge of the text of the plays, which he could reel off from memory almost without a break, as well as an intense unaffected sympathy with imaginative genius in all its artistic forms and a no less real humane kindness for the heroic failures or the unheroic weaknesses of human beings. These things, together with his flair for writing, peculiarly qualified him for his task. But nevertheless it cannot be denied that his Shakespearian studies are not the masterpieces of interpretation that he must have supposed. The best book upon Shakespeare in a decade or so is not, because it may be the best during that short interval, necessarily to be considered the peer, or nearly the peer, of, let us say, the writings of Charles Lamb or of Coleridge on this theme, or of the ripe if less immediately human and affectionate criticism of a Bradley. Harris—so one suspects—was gnawed by the implied rejection of his great claim, and, being intensely ambitious for that which we call literary "immortality", resolved to make an altogether different bid for it. If not Shakespeare, then smut—the latter being not un-Shakespearian, since before we assert that he was "the less Shakespeare" for this accretion, and recall that Spenser showed it to be no necessary ingredient of (undramatic) verse, we must remember that the theatre is nearer to the market-place than poetry written to be read. From Aristophanes and the early Greek vase-painters, through Martial and the Roman satirists, through the Middle Ages to Rabelais, down (in truth) to the new dawn of humanistic literature, facetiae have been a recognized current in the art of letters; and, these apart, there has been the converging stream of picaresque narrative, invention, and memoirs, with such great names as those of Casanova, Boccaccio, Sterne, Swift, or Voltaire, not to mention the admirably blunt words in the majestic prose of the Authorised Version, associated more or less obviously with it. True, neither the subject, nor the allusions, nor the carnality of the interest nor monkeyness of treatment is worth a rap in itself. Literature is literature because of no animalism, because of no spiritual exaltation, but because the art of letters, being a great art, can in the hands of a master subdue everything. All we can fairly admit is one tendency, in the words of a Greek scholar, to maintain "a wholesome abstention from spirituality"; in sum, great literature satisfies *both* extremes of man's desires. A man like Frank Harris who had a tendency to literary silt—he told me himself that the original text of his excellent novel *The Bomb* had been much scored before publication—was likely to over-estimate the virtue of smut by preference and by reaction from the futility of euphemism. This is the utmost that the charity of criticism can concede to him.

But to return to my anecdote. *My Life and Loves,* Harris's would-be autobiographical essay in this kind, had not, I think, left its German printers when we met. Before the year was out some allusion thereto met my eye, but I thought no more about it until a bookseller sent me an invitation to see something that he thought would interest me. When I had arrived, he opened a locked drawer and drew from it a large volume, the size known as royal octavo, measuring about twelve inches by eight. Outside was a dust-wrapper of the same

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size on which was printed in letters appropriately large, but in the font that was very familiar to me, THE IDEA OF COVENTRY PATMORE, with the imprint of the Oxford University Press below. *Inside* was a copy of Harris's book, which he was evidently trying to smuggle out of its German lurking-place in the disguise of an enlarged but otherwise exact facsimile of my own respectable dust-wrapper! The bookseller could not be persuaded to part with this dust-jacket, so I came away empty, and without the proof in my possession. Harris and I never met or heard from each other after our interview at Cimiez.

To have a dust-wrapper plagiarized in this fashion was a queer experience, and whether it was effective one could not know. Yet it did so happen that the not yet dead demand for the original *The Idea of Coventry Patmore,* thus imitated, received a slight impetus after 1925, so possibly something resulted from this unexpected and uncomfortable little advertisement!

Misadventures more technical and less accidental happen to every writer, and these, if less odd, are at least more encouraging. The commonest and the most humiliating is the quest for the opening sentence. The scribbler has his subject; the pleasant movement of novel, of essay, of biography, has long been unfolding with the apparently inevitable welling of a freshet in the hills; he knows, too, how this movement is to be balanced, knows whether it is to begin *andante*, quicken into an *allegro con brio*, and spread at last, when the stream of narrative or of exposition shall have reached its end, into the lake of a quiet *adagio* or of recapitulation, or whether the contrary. It is all in his head. But, especially if he be an inexperienced writer, and experience can be gained only by making and then recognizing mistakes, no sooner has he spread his sheet fairly and dipped his pen than these two little acts, normally as delightful as the moment of crouching is to a sea-gull before it rises from the water, refuse the opening word. Like a gull indeed, caught by a drift of slime from an oil-burning steamer, he cannot spread his wings. There is a mental and imaginative stoppage. The sentence, the crucial opening sentence will not come.

This, by the way, no longer happens to me, for I never rise from the arm-chair in which I read until the first sentence of story, essay, dialogue, or even review is quick and tapping as actively as an unreleased chick inside my head. For the rightness of this method the authority of a good writer can now be quoted; and the reader will imagine how attentively the following remark, made by George Moore to Mr. Geraint Goodwin, was noted, and then memorized. To be safely accurate I will quote here the very words in which George Moore impressed his maxim: they are taken from page 55 of the English edition of Mr. Goodwin's admirable record *Conversations with George Moore* (Heinemann, 1929):—

> MOORE: I will tell you how the book may be written. You must start with a statement—a statement of fact.
>
> GOODWIN: Quite, I replied, with some hesitancy.
>
> MOORE: A simple statement such as, "He caught the train at ten o'clock in the morning", or "He did not catch the train", as you please, and then you continue; that is much better than moralizing. . . . Moralize if you like, but moralize around the facts and not at their expense. . . .
>
> GOODWIN: I am going all out after your character. There is enough scope, surely. . . .
>
> MOORE: No, no, no—you are in error—in grave error. My dear young man, don't you see, character can only spring out of incident. . . .

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The devotion of a life-time to the art of narrative (and even essays are a kind of narration), to the conduct of an argument, to the disposition of description with comment, to the introduction, appearance, and dismissal of the essayist's own self, prompted these words. Never forget them! Then you will never long be balked by the ass's bridge of the question: how to begin.

Yet it can be a tremendous difficulty even to the great. There is a distinguished writer and lecturer on Greek and matters concerning the League of Nations much admired by Americans and (though a Fellow of a Cambridge college!) more than once praised by Mr. H. G. Wells, who told me the following story. He was writing his first book, a book about the political history of France during the nineteenth century. A man whose style, scholarship, and thoroughness have been universally admitted, even by critics who have refused to be persuaded by his charm, he had clearly made all his notes and had sketched all his chapters before beginning to write. Yet, he said, when it came to start he was pen-tied. He sat in despair biting his pen, but nothing came of it. What was he to do? He took a sheet of paper and began to write at random, to write anything that came into his head. Over the quality he paid no heed but sadly scribbled on, with the subject of his chapter somewhere befogged at the back of his mind, and in this way he covered, in secret shame, several folio pages. At last he began to feel that he was coming to grips with his subject. He breathed again and continued, much relieved, to write on. Then he put his work aside until the following morning. Blue pencil in hand, he struck through page after page until he came to the first sentence in which his subject had quickened. This became the opening of the published book. He told me that he had never found a more sovereign solution of this hoary difficulty of authorship. As he was in charge of my studies at the time, he received double attention; and when (how often since then!) I have found a page of padding at the beginning of some book, I have often wondered why writers do not make a habit of cutting out this preliminary cough or "ahem"; for—let the reader make no mistake about this—every writer worthy of the name well knows when he is wasting your time, and none worthy of the name but blushes until he has done his duty by you.

After the opening the title; for a title, like a preface, is often not determined until the whole book shall have been written, though sometimes, it is true, the words of the title (being the distillation of the subject) are the inspiration of the whole. Yet even in journalism of any quality the title (if not forthcoming) generally lurks somewhere in the text; and the art of discovering its lair is to scrutinize your pregnant sentences carefully. Simplicity, I think, is the key. One publisher wanted my work about the eighteen-ninety group to be called *The Yellow Nineties*—a wish indignantly refused. Convinced that Aubrey Beardsley was the dominant person, his name, I felt, must be used; but not exclusively, since the subject was a flock, and a flock is not known by the name of its bellwether. Weeks were wasted in vain until my familiar, in a benign moment, led me to re-read the essays of Max Beerbohm where the sentence "I belong to the Beardsley Period" solved (with grateful acknowledgment) every difficulty. *The Brownings*, of course, needed no searching, but over the subject of the Carlyles much hesitation occurred. One had to avoid a banal repetition, to suggest (if one could) a distinction also. The marriage of the Brownings is thought

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to have been not only the uniting of a predestined pair but (through their child) the unity of a trinity: three in one and one in three. The marriage of the Carlyles had been thought less happy and, besides, they had no child. How to convey all this in three words? *The Two Carlyles* seemed to mark the difference simply, though probably not one reader in a thousand will have noticed any different significance in the titles of the Browning and the Carlyle books. But the thousandth reader will and he is the reader whom an author most wishes to please.

Now if one turns to some unselfconscious phrase in the text of a book or of a paragraph even, for a title that shall be simplicity and naturalness itself, what does one do when no such phrase catches one's eye? It may be there and be missed, for the search is fraying to the nerves and frayed nerves disperse true attention. Well, once I had a very happy experience. In a note book reserved for such things, a number of sentences, apothegms, laconics, and so forth had been collecting (fifteen years ago). One idle morning, by which is meant a morning when the turning over of the sweepings from one's desk is the best means of coaxing the Muse into a surprise visit, after they had been read through for the first time in sequence, they suggested the notion of a collection which (in the manner, if you want an unnecessary precedent, of the Pilgrim's Scrip that George Meredith fathered upon Sir Austin Feverel) might be attributed to some imaginary character in a story, a play, or a novel. For such a purpose a title was essential, and no title would come, for my familiar was in a teasing mood, the mood in which he would keep saying that the Muse was on her way without proving able to announce her. When he had teased me to the limit of endurance, I determined to drive him out of my head, and to try to find the title for which I was waiting in an entirely different quarter. Sometimes it becomes necessary to play a practical joke on him, for one's familiar likes to pretend that he is indispensable.

Thereupon I seized my hat, left the house, and made my way to the nearest grocer's shop: a small shop in a rather mean street, not patronized by the few well-to-do people in the neighbourhood. Rich people, you see, are only partly real, and that is why, as a rule, they are of little interest or value to authors. Having reached the shop, I decided to ask for something that the grocer would be unlikely to have, because I wanted him to make a long and fruitless search in order that I might have an excuse for loitering and for listening to any other chance customer.

So far as I can recall, I asked for a bottle of French white-wine vinegar, and denounced the fellow chaffingly when he tried (of course) to palm upon me the English and vile substitute known as "malt-vinegar". Then the unexpected happened. While the wretched man was fumbling among his bins and his shelves on the chance of finding the single bottle of true vinegar which some commercial traveller probably years ago had with difficulty pressed upon him—"there being no demand" for the genuine stuff—a little girl, rather ragged, happy-looking, and dirty, entered. She put forward a grubby hand and laid a penny on the counter, which was not far below the level of her chin. The man returned.

"What do you want this morning, Rosie?" he asked kindly.

"A pennyworth of pot-herbs, please," she said.

I started up, saying that it did not matter

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about the vinegar, and went home cheerfully with the title that Rosie unconsciously had coined.

The title was never used until the other day, since the idea of an imaginary book of maxims was abandoned and the best of them have found their scattered way into appropriate corners of the books called my "works". It is memory that makes us immortal even in this life, and an author is one whose memory is like a cellar every old bottle in which can be identified even in the dark.

Fifteen years is not long to wait for the right application of a title; and, if I knew who Rosie was or what had become of her, only the chance of boring her would deter me from offering to dedicate *A Pennyworth of Pot-herbs* to her. Even the gratitude of authors, I am afraid, is likely to carry a trace of egoism. On the other hand, many unimaginative people deserve (far more than the subject of the epigram) one of Wilde's wittiest labels: the unimaginative person is, too often, "an egoist without an ego".

A common misadventure for which authors have themselves to blame is to live almost entirely with literary people. This is an almost fatal mistake. We learn most from those unlike ourselves; we do not appreciate the qualities or the natural beauties even of our own country until we have been abroad and so had the chance to compare our own scenery and habits with those of foreigners. To be untravelled socially is to make a gratuitous mistake, since one cannot so much as stir from one's own garden without meeting people of a different (and therefore instructive) upbringing, calling, experience, or habit. To attend few parties, to belong to no similarly-minded set, is a necessity for an author. The pleasures and the rewards of straying socially are incalculable.

The incident of Rosie was strictly true. The following tale of Mr. Bernard Shaw may not be; but whether new (I heard it only lately) or old, it will bear repetition. According to my informant, the Irish playwright had hailed a taxi-cab driver in London and was driven to his intended destination. On leaving the cab, and on handing his fare, the hirer of the cab was met with a refusal. When he asked why the man would not accept the money, the taxi-driver replied:—

"I know you well by sight. You have given to me much pleasure by your plays. I am happy to drive you, once at least, for nothing. We may never meet again, sir."

This plea was answered by a characteristic outburst of indignation, in which the man was ridiculed for wishing to be romantic about money. It is easy to imagine the scene. At the end of this speech, the taxi-driver, undismayed by "John Tanner's" plausibilities, held up his hand.

"Just one moment, Mr. Shaw," he said quietly. "You are a dramatist and I am a motor-engineer. We can each add to one another's comfort. Therefore, I ask you once more—as one artist to another—to take a free drive from me."

"As one artist to another" was magnificent; but the wit is worth remembering for its kernel. An author should lend a ready ear to everybody. An author should be everybody's friend. Snobbery is impossible on the roads that lead to Helicon. For the unimaginative there is an empty present, no future, a forgotten past. "The future is what artists are" because, as William Blake said, "what is now proved was once only imagined".

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ARNOLD BENNETT IN PARIS

by Violet Hunt

"It's a strange thing, existence, isn't it?" Bennett wrote me. "Maugham runs after me on the boulevard and brings me to you and in no time at all I am engaged to Miss Eleanora Green. And now I wish to see what sort of a letter of congratulation a woman, experienced in literature and life, can write." I wrote him one which pleased him, as you shall see, but that part of the story comes later.

That little excursion of Somerset Maugham's across the crowded boulevard to catch "Enoch Arnold", as he persisted in calling him, was the very beginning of my long friendship with Arnold Bennett. I was staying in the Rue de la Paix and often went to see Mr. Maugham in his flat on the Rive Gauche. We were parting after a good gossip at the corner of the boulevard when suddenly he said "There goes Arnold Bennett!" I said "Can you catch him?" and together we crossed the road. Maugham bolted up the Rue Vivienne and found Bennett just where the pavement narrows in front of a print shop into whose windows he happened to be looking. The introduction took place, and there began a long and intimate friendship.

Before this I had known Mr. Bennett only as a writer and as the editor of that small piece of truculency called *Woman*. I had read *The Card* and *Leonora,* and in his magazine he had rashly printed a story by a friend of mine, Clara Savile Clark. It portrayed another editor with whom she had quarreled and it almost resulted in a libel action.

Subsequently, during one of my yearly autumn visits to Paris, I introduced Mr. Bennett to my permanent chaperon—in those days we still needed them. Agnes Farley was the wife of the clever American trick dentist who could take a tooth out and put it in again upside down, and could fill a cavity in the mouth of a home-bound millionaire with a diamond or what not, just for the benefit of the voyage and the Customs on the other end. She was a clever Irishwoman who spoke French like a native—as, at that time, Mr. Bennett did not. He came to like her so much that he gave her his unpublished poems—where are they now?—and it was she who introduced him to her great friend the beautiful Miss Green with the wealth of red-gold hair. Bennett said that Miss Green gave him "a new belief in himself"; for he re-read all that he had written on "the extremely mixed sensations of love", which he was now tasting for the first time in his life, and "was astounded at the clear insight" which he had always had about these things. It was in Mrs. Farley's country house, at Beaumont-le-Roger near Lisieux, that Arnold Bennett and Eleanora Green became engaged. When his hostess later wrote a book about the place (*The Belmont Book*), out of gratitude Bennett did a charming preface for it and got it published for her.

But that was not yet. When Somerset

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Maugham left Paris and I wanted somebody to go about with, I turned to Arnold Bennett. He was a charming, patient, erudite, and sporting companion and there was not a sight or a sound of Paris with which he was not acquainted. His French, which was grammatical enough, was deplorable so far as accent was concerned; but he got along splendidly. There was not a place of amusement or a restaurant about which he did not know, and together we sampled those on both banks—not of course the very expensive ones. Our dinners—he didn't want wine but I made him drink it—used to cost for the two of us not more than six or eight francs, and he loyally permitted me to pay my share. (Though it came to more, we scarcely got better dinners at the Berkeley in London afterwards, when he came into his own.)

There was a wonderful eating place in the Place Pigalle and another in the Rue d'Amsterdam, where potatoes and haddock were blended together in blocks of succulency that you lifted with a broad spoon off the tray they were cooked on. Bennett always knew the waitresses and the *dames de comptoir* very well (though he was rather austere with them); he seemed to be familiar with all their affairs and those of the management, too—an interest which foreshadowed *Imperial Hotel*. Afterwards he would take me somewhere, perhaps to the Moulin Rouge—under protest, for it was the kind of place patronized only by international trippers. Bennett utterly disdained vulgar shows like Heaven and Hell, with the unmentionable *épergne* full of flowers in the middle of the dinner table, where all the English *would* go. The dancing hall at Montmartre was better. Quietly, like two *bons bourgeois*, we would sit at a little rickety table with iron legs, order our bocks, and watch the dancers, "sad with the whole of sadness". I remember his delight in a stately midinette, looking so *comme il faut* in her black tailor-made coat and skirt and her wide but sober and restrained hat as she went round slowly in the arms of her man. Such a gentle yet complete abandon I have never seen out of flighty Paris, and still I can hear Arnold murmur in my ear "Passion! Perfect passion! Did you ever see anything like it? They might be going round and round in one of the circles of Hell—or Heaven! It would be all the same to them". Circling, twisting, wheeling, never jostling with the others—her chin upturned, her gloved fingers laid laxly on his shoulders; his arm and hand possessive on hers. Every time this pair came round Arnold Bennett breathed a deep sigh of pleasure. Sometimes I longed to get up and dance but it would have been like bouncing on to a stage already set. Besides, Arnold could not dance.

Often as not after dining we would go straight to the Rue de Calais, up steep, uncarpeted wooden stairs, all the way to his flat, where he would put some milk on to boil, sit down to the piano, and pound out Chopin like a girl at school—but with a certain impressiveness. I always remember the blunt, earnest profile, the labouring outline of his figure making an acute angle as he sat tight on the music-stool and ploughed out the heavy chords. Self-taught, or was he taking lessons? His playing was the only thing he was humble about. Every time I asked for that particular Prelude, with its drin-drin like the blare of a trombone under the sea, he said (and so it came to appear to me) that it figured to him a drowned man, still, pacified, with the waves washing over him, thundering everlastingly from above as he lay down there on the sea floor amongst the other wrack.

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It became a fascinating horror. I would ask for that Prelude and then I would look wildly about the room for relief. Arnold had furnished his room with things picked up in several years of Paris *flânerie*. He was especially fond of Empire furniture and he had about a dozen of Josephine's shawls. All the furniture, Mrs. Farley said, was fake except a particular commode worth what he had given for the lot—and more. I would hear the cabs outside hurrying along and would remember that I had to get back to the Rue de la Paix and that my knight would not see me home. (It was a compact entered into willingly on both sides: he was a bad sleeper and, besides, he did not want to break the atmosphere.) But then the milk would boil and we would drink our glassesful and talk of our books. He would have read my last. He said yes, I "could write", but he hoped I would refrain from desecrating my next novel with quotations—Bennett thought I should be spoken to about this and he did so from a sense of duty. I must know perfectly well that in the literary convention it was bad form—almost invariably a symptom of the third-rate. And it annoyed him dreadfully! Also, what I needed was "uplift". (I noticed that he always chose words that did not render him liable to stuttering.) He himself wrote four books a year, three for money and one to please himself, and warned me not to read any such. I had read *Hugo's* and told him I did not like it. But I wasn't expected to like it! It was too bad that his friends could not refrain from reading his "un-literature", which he wrote solely to put himself in a position to offer himself a few luxuries such as Empire furniture and so on.

Arnold was perhaps too conceited to want to talk much about himself and, for the same reason, rather careless of the productions of another. We discussed great "deaders". I was *not* to say that Balzac was superior to Stendhal: Balzac had never written anything so fine in the true sense of the word as *La Chartreuse de Parme*. That Arnold himself was superior to De Morgan was of course true (I suppose I said so and I think it): he would have been the last to deny it but it did annoy him that people should say he imitated De Morgan or was of his school. Why, he had written a dozen books before D.M. had written one, and at least four of them were better than anything that the "clever old gent" could do!

Next year the *décor* was the same except for some new Empire furniture. But now he was writing *The Old Wives' Tale*, and—had Mrs. Farley told me?—he was going to offer himself the luxury of a wife. A member of his fiancée's family was giving him the most wonderful material for the book in question!

The Greens were from America, but Madame Fillonneau, Mrs. Green's mother and a Parisian, had been all through the siege of Paris. Her earlier experiences dated still further back. She had been a young wife when the barrack they called *le Vieux Louvre* was restored and opened as a picture gallery with the gravestones of the *Cimetière des Innocents* forming the staircase at whose head stands the Winged Victory. The unnamed, uncounted squatters were given a week to clear out. An endless procession—Madame Fillonneau used to tell me she wouldn't have thought that one roof could cover so many people—passed out with their sick and aged, their bedding and pots and pans stacked on handcarts. A wonderful old lady, Madame Fillonneau, and a wonderful family! Julian Green was a little boy then and Mrs. Farley was his godmother. His mother liked him dressed English and asked me to bring her a little sailor suit from Swears and Wells next

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time I came and not forget the lanyard and the whistle. His sister Anne, now a full-blown novelist like her brother, was at the same pension as my niece, a lovely girl of sixteen, rosy and golden-haired, who Arnold for some reason or other always said was mad. Arnold did not care for her or youth in general but he adored old ladies like Madame Fillonneau and my mother, who interested him a great deal more than I did.

Once, when it was time to leave the old lady and it was pelting with rain, as it can in Paris in a horribly tropical way, he fetched me a cab and put me into it. I was leaving for England the next day and I offered to take the finished manuscript of his new book, with the idea of saving him the expense of postage and registration. "Heaven forbid!" he exclaimed, "I had sooner trust the post than a lady novelist!" And perhaps he was right. Anyway, he did not register it at all, and yet there was only one copy of this quarter of his year's work, hand written in a square, red, calf-bound volume.

With *The Old Wives' Tale* he "arrived" and I remember, when I was staying at the Wells's, at Sandgate, H. G., who had been in town, came back in time for dinner and tossed a copy of the book into my lap, saying so. There was no jealousy between these two.

Next time I came to Paris Arnold had moved to a new flat, something more roomy and "less altitudinous". And he would not play to me Chopin, but Bach, for whom he had now developed a passion. Something had happened—he was changed.

Presently I heard that his engagement had been broken off. "Her feelings, violent enough at one time", did not ultimately justify marriage. "Rather desolating, isn't it?" he wrote from Dartmoor, where he was staying with Eden Phillpotts. "But such is life!" And I had written him such a nice letter of congratulation that he thought I might as well know that "such *was* life!" He had rushed through London without seeing me, only spending enough time in town to get shaved. I wrote again, and again he said it was a nice letter. And that he would not blot out the last six months even if he could. He had considered that he knew all about women before but he knew more now and "I have never yet bought knowledge too dearly". He felt he knew more about himself and could write better books. He was a writer first, after all—"the rest comes later".

Brave words! And full of wisdom. He did know life. One could take problems to him and await his verdict, delivered like that of a High Priest, slowly, lest his message be invalidated through stammering.

"You can do nothing!" he said.

And one accepted it and did nothing. Such *was* life.

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ANNE AND JULIAN GREEN

by Willis Steell

I TAKE particular satisfaction in writing about these two young American authors who have lived all their lives in France because of the fact that I can claim them as a sort of personal discovery. In the case of both the acquaintance was due more or less to accident. Somebody told me that the first novel of a young American, written in the French language moreover, had been published by Plon. I read *Mont Cinère* at once, felt appalled by its qualities of horror and hopelessness and equally amazed by its power. The book commanded some of the emotions wrought by a reading of *Jane Eyre* in adolescence. In my capacity as literary editor a letter went to the author begging him to come and talk to me.

He came, with what result will be recounted in the proper place. Here I wish to break off to tell how I learned that Julian had a sister and that she was also a writer. He had not mentioned either fact. It was at a luncheon with Anna Bowman Dodd, a charming old lady who had just got rid of a manor in Normandy and come to Paris to live in an apartment in the Rue Marignan, furnishing it with lovely pieces which, in spite of their dating from various periods, managed to live together politely if not in perfect amity. She knew and admired Anne Green, prophesying for her a future.

This tiny old lady, distinguished in many other ways, was personally distinguished by a laugh with sunshine in it; she was at the moment bringing out her *Talleyrand* and at the same time a new edition—the thirty-third or thirty-fourth printing?—of her first success *Three Normandy Inns*; but while interestingly discursive about her own works she kept both eyes on all French and English literature and by a rather old-fashioned standard judged the writers. Julian Green's talent was rich, said Madame Dodd, but the fruit was "high" like game and rather sickened her. Anne, now, would go farther along more popular lines. "Besides," added this woman who looked, thought, spoke like a French marquise, "Anne writes in English, which, after all is granted that is due to French authors, is the only language where one can say anything and everything."

Daisy, Countess of Something-or-other, an American who had married a Frenchman just before the War, lost him in the ensuing conflict, but saved his title, contributed an anecdote to this literary gossip. "Anne Green", said she, "has a little habit of following her brother's example. When he published a series of articles on dead-and-gone British authors—Cooper, Pope and the like—in the *Hebdomadaire*, she sent off a few of her own to that journal, and they were accepted. They differed in every respect from her brother's, for she took as subjects prize fighters, cabaret singers, characters of the moment—freaks, if you will. When Julian had *Mont Cinère* accepted Anne said right off, 'I shall write a novel too'. 'You can't,' said her brother, 'and if you send it to Plon he will cancel my contract.' 'Too bad,' mur-

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mured the merciless Anne, 'but Plon is the very editor who shall have my manuscript in two weeks from today.' 'You can't write a novel in two weeks!' 'Can't I?' scoffed Anne. 'Anybody could provided she didn't grovel blindly for words in your fashion!' "

Countess Daisy made a dramatic pause before she said: "And in precisely two weeks Anne's manuscript was ready and off it went —not to Plon, for she wouldn't spoke Julian's wheel, but to a publisher in America".

Julian, and Anne as well, describe Daisy's story as *blague*, suitable for a congress of old women; but it has the insane vitality of so many other literary anecdotes equally apocryphal, and like them will probably go on living.

For two human beings so closely related in blood, two authors so different in thought, in their logic of thought, in their manner of expressing their thoughts, could hardly be found in the current or in any writing period as Julian Green and his sister. The same wide differences characterize the pair judged as human beings. Anne so frank, genial, liking her friends irrespective of faults and virtues, disliking antipathetic people with the same heartiness. Julian shy, retiring, blushing when his work is praised, receiving honours almost shamefacedly. Julian, explaining against his will his choice of characters and his way of treating them, mutters:—

"I have to write in my own way or not at all."

"But why always sombre?"

"I don't know," says Julian.

In spite of his reticence, possibly because of it, the youthful novelist made a distinct appeal to me when he came to see me; the result was that I devoted an entire page with a reproduced photograph to him. This brought a note of acknowledgment written in good taste and expressing just the proper amount of gratitude.

Another result of this was a continuation of the acquaintance thus pleasantly begun. "How about a small tea?" said I to the lady who makes it on occasion. "He told me he didn't know any of the French authors; we might ask the few we know, and all the Americans from Montparnasse who wear a collar. It might help." "What, ask them here?" she cried with true housekeeper's dismay, for "here" represented a small furnished flat in the Square Theodore Judlin with auction-room pictures in gaudy frames on the walls and imitation Buhl "pieces" cluttering up the salon.

The little party came off under protest without open scorn of the *meubles*. Julian Green was a success in a modest way. The French had read his book and paid him many compliments which he acknowledged

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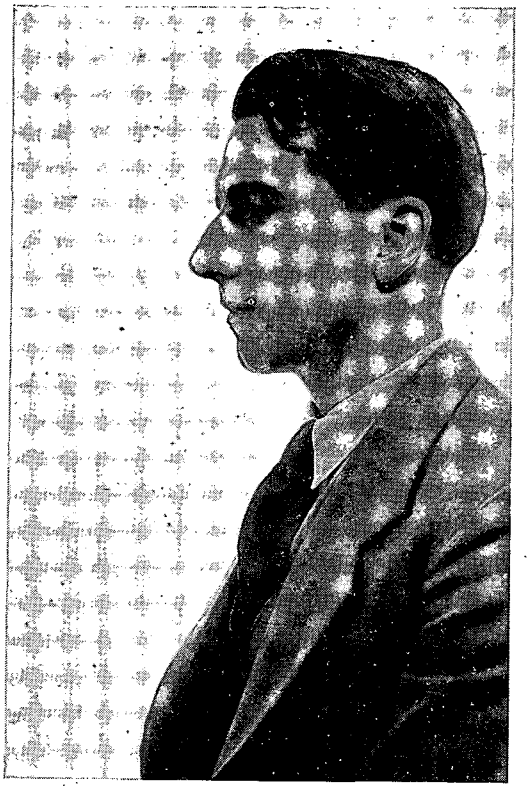
modestly, blushing when they seemed excessive. The American writers who hadn't read it vowed they would. Yes, the young "lion" made a good impression; everybody liked him.

But Julian was French and his publishers were well advised to turn the spelling of his name into an "e" before the sixth letter, and no one protested. He was French in his attitude towards life; the landscape of his fiction never could be mistaken for anywhere in America, but would always pass for "somewhere" in France. The scene, he said, was laid in Virginia (he referred to *Mont Cinère*) where he had been sent for two years to brush up his native language and acquire an easy degree. Both statements were solemnly trusted by the aspiring young French authors who admired that great work of fiction and secretly envied its producer. Their interest never wandered from the safe literary garden, and no one cared to know where in Paris he lived or what relatives he had. To inquire into such subjects is bad form in France. Americans who live even a little permanently in France sooner or later adopt the same reticence, but it is against the grain.

So when Julian came to the house-party that we later gave, after signing a lease for an apartment in the Grand Cailloux quarter, he had to face a stiff bombardment of personal questions. There were too many Americans among the guests all curious to know intimate details of the life of the young Franco-American who had won the Harper prize.

Julian had nothing to hide and nothing to add to a literal answer of a straightly put question. He lived across the river, in Passy not far from the Trocadero, and quite near to the Benjamin Franklin statue. His home was in the same apartment where his father



and mother died. They had been dead ten years.

Yes, part of his education had been acquired in Virginia where he lived with an aunt after losing his parents.

It was all straightforward like his answer to the question everybody puts to him: "Why do you write that way?" and his reply, "I have to write thus or not at all". Straight answers but not illuminating.

And still not a word about Anne!

It was some time after I had learned through Mrs. Dodd that Anne existed that I heard Anne's voice. Over the telephone, she called me to say that her brother, who was expected for *déjeuner* on the following day, couldn't keep his engagement as he had been called out of town. It was an agreeable voice, crisp but musical. I liked it and without reflection said at once: "Won't you come in

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his stead?" And she, as quick on the trigger, said she would. And did. And so at last I met Anne.

It is a great pleasure to meet an author before one has read his book. Then if you have any insight into human nature you are almost certain to know whether he will write like himself or like someone he greatly admires and whose style he has swallowed. Nobody could meet Anne Green and hear her breezy and easy talk without hoping that she would write just like it. She does.

When later, not more than a week or so later, I read *The Selbys* I had the sensation of listening to her tell the story of that quaint and lovable couple, her own father and mother, and getting to know them as it is seldom given the reader to know even the most realistic characters of the most famous naturalistic novelists. Here, I cried, here at last are real people who do not smell of print! And the naïve style! A new note which I devoutly hope she will never lose.

On the eve of the publication of *Reader, I Married Him* what used to be called *une petite comité* met for *déjeuner* in the apartment where Anne and her brother had helped one another in the tedious process of growing up. Rue Cortembert with its double line of sentinel sycamores faces a park-like space, or rather a little hill, dotted picturesquely with foliage plants at the level of the tops of the trees that have their roots in the avenue which skirts its base. It is an attractive residential section, *rus in urbe*, or at least with a few marks of that condition left from Franklin's day. The buildings, not *grande luxe*, are solidly built and, judging the row by the apartment of the young authors, have more space, light, and air than those of the same class built since the War.

Since brother and sister had become popular authors, books had flooded the house, for it is the fraternal habit of French authors to bestow a copy of their works on those of the guild whom they admire, and the moderns do sincerely admire Julian Green. That a man without Gallic blood in his veins has been able to duplicate the triumph of Anthony Hamilton, equalling and even surpassing them in the use of their beautiful language, they consider as a thing miraculous and worth a tribute. That tribute ordinarily takes the form of a book. It has been awarded so bountifully that books have overflowed into the *salle à manger*. In that room, over the bookcases and on either side of the open grate, hang paintings—beautiful, dim landscape scenes all by the same brush, possibly offerings by some admirer who works in a different field, just as possibly chosen by Julian himself, whose retiring manners they reflect. Anne never selected these paintings; she would choose brighter, gayer subjects, splashes of color, a *paysage* with *brio*.

Dangerous as it generally is to build up the character of an author from his books when you have no acquaintance with him, it ought not to be so in the case of Anne Green. Her attitude towards life is cheerful but she is far removed from that depressing person we meet now and then who aims to be always amusing and who by disinterring *bons mots* from the grave becomes a nuisance. Anne Green's good humour comes from within and is heartfelt; in consequence she is not harshly critical of any human being. At her table as in her books she exercises a gift which is not often seen, a facility of getting intoxicated on air. It is an inheritance from her mother, the Madame Selby who on her first appearance in book form amused two continents. She could not have done this —I am referring to the mother of the author —had her spirits been professionally gay or her attitude calculated.

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"In my mother there was real fecklessness and inconsequence, which were just a coating to a kind and generous nature", said Anne. "Everything she is described as doing in my book and all her amusing remarks are transcriptions of fact. She often said, and believed it, that she had no time for nonsense. She met seriousness and gloom in a conquering spirit, and she had the gift of laughter. I wish I could explode the myth so many readers seem to hold that the author 'made up' this character, giving me credit for more imagination than I possess. The Selbys, both of them, were drawn from life."

Don't get the impression that Anne Green talked of herself, her family and her "works" throughout the meal, for what has been written was all she said on the subject, and it came out in answer to searching questioning. In fact, she appeared to be more interested in a new coffee machine she had recently acquired, and when she saw the topic of conversation becoming too personal she diverted it to that utensil. Anne Green is a well balanced young woman of the world and she has lived in Paris too long to have much time for futilities.

Perhaps it is by borrowing a line from an American's quatrain that Anne Green measures the measureless miles that divide her from Poe Land, the weird domain where Julian reigns as a kind of absolute monarch. "He drew a circle that kept me out", sang the poet Masters, and a woman full of the joy of life as this sister is feels no chagrin because of an edict of banishment from a society naturally antipathetic to her. Anne is proud of Julian's triumphs and holds him the artist preëminent. Julian has got over his wonder at Anne's success and rejoices in it. The friends of both are divided, some preferring steady sunshine and some a lurid glow.

When Plon in 1930 published Julian's book of short stories, *Le Voyageur sur la Terre*, Anne was already a best-seller; and the rumour going about that three at least of his chief personages were young, the hope was expressed that he might have taken a leaf from her books and for once written joyfully. Needless to say the hope proved vain. The brief tale *Christine* in this collection is one of the most poignant ever written, simple in the extreme but saturated with horror. Julian Green is incorrigible.

Not so Anne. In *Marietta*, her current volume, there are depths beneath the frolic which add a new lustre to the high lights. It is true that to read this book is to "fleet the time carelessly", but under its merriment exists the intention to create a true picture of our world today.

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SHERLOCK HOLMES AMONG THE ILLUSTRATORS

by Edmund Pearson

Conan Doyle imagined Sherlock Holmes as a man with a thin hawk-like nose, piercing eyes, and so excessively lean that he seemed even taller than his actual six feet. Thus the author described him in the first Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet*.

Later, Doyle emphasized his idea that Holmes had a "razor-like face; a great hawk's-bill of a nose; two small eyes set close together" and that he was powerful but ugly. His first important illustrator, Sidney Paget, made a Holmes who was tall, but not extremely tall, and who was far from "ugly". Dr. Doyle thought that this was because Paget had used his brother Walter as a model. He believed that the more comely detective was perhaps fortunately drawn to please the ladies. The writer of the sketch of Paget in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, however, denies that the artist used his brother or anyone else as a model. He leaves you to suppose that Paget drew Holmes from his own fancy, based on Doyle's description as given in the stories comprised in the *Adventures*.

One or two artists preceded Paget. Sherlock Holmes appeared for the first time in print in 1887, when *A Study in Scarlet* was published in that queer-looking periodical, *Beeton's Christmas Annual*. Despite many excellencies, and one surprise never bettered in any of the tales, this novel attracted little notice. For the initial appearance of a detective whose exploits were to be recorded for nearly forty years, a veteran illustrator of that day, D. H. Friston, was called upon.

This first picture of Holmes would distress the devotees. Friston's Sherlock is neither handsome nor intellectual; he wears undertaker's side-whiskers, an ulster with a cape, and a hat like nothing on sea or land—a sort of bastard child of a bowler out of a sombrero. With a magnifying glass as big as a sunflower, he is examining the word RACHE written in blood upon the wall. About him, in grotesque attitudes, stand Watson—with a walrus's moustache—and the Scotland Yarders, Gregson and Lestrade. Mr. Friston seems to have thought that the scene was macabre, and that the characters should look like gargoyles.

In the second edition of the story, in book form, there are said to be six illustrations by the novelist's father, Charles Doyle. They should be interesting; Conan Doyle thought his father the greatest and most original of a family of artists.

The next Holmes story, another short novel, *The Sign of the Four*, appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine*, February, 1890. There is one illustration, a scene in India, in which Holmes does not appear.

The short stories which carried Holmes's fame around the world, the *Adventures*, began in the *Strand Magazine*, July, 1891. For these the already mentioned Sidney Edward Paget, a young illustrator of about thirty, began to draw the Holmes whose features became familiar throughout the British Em-

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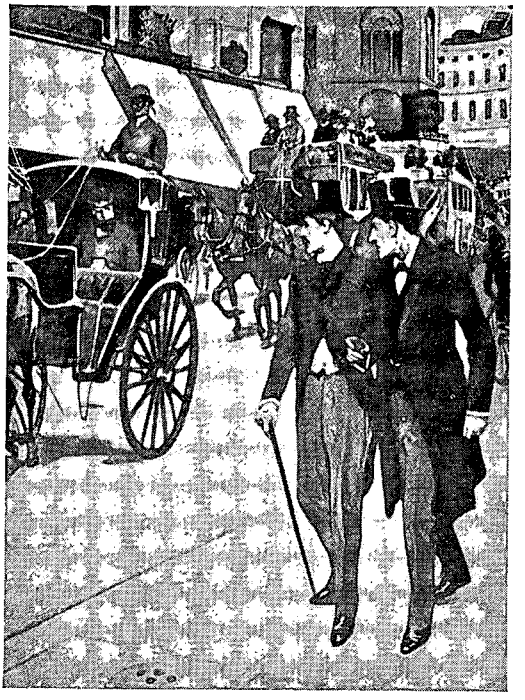
pire and to some early enthusiasts in the United States. His Holmes had a long nose, high forehead, rather bald temples, and, when at home in Baker Street, usually wore a frock coat. A typical picture is reproduced here: Sherlock is holding the Countess of Morcar's blue carbuncle (found in the gizzard of a goose) over the terrified thief, James Ryder. Dr. Watson stands by with restoratives.

One of the actors who impersonated Holmes in our own time—Arthur Wontner, in the screen play, *Sherlock Holmes's Fatal Hour*—closely resembled the detective of Paget's pictures.

There is an impression that Mr. William Gillette, in his play, first put Holmes in a deer-stalker's cap with visors fore and aft. In one of the early *Strand* stories, however, *The Boscombe Valley Mystery,* Dr. Doyle says that Holmes wore a "close-fitting cloth cap", and Paget shows him with a fore-and-after. Watson, even in the country, sticks to his bowler. Mr. Gillette played Holmes in one of these caps, on one evening in London when he was headed for the Stepney gas chamber and rough work.

"'Have mercy!' he shrieked." Sidney Paget's traditional Holmes, drawn for the "Strand Magazine", 1891-1892.



"'I was aware of a bushy black beard and a pair of piercing eyes turned upon us.'" Watson and Holmes on the war path, drawn by Sidney Paget. (McClure, Phillips & Co.)

American editors, in 1893, began to be interested in Holmes, and the second series, the *Memoirs*, ran in *Harper's Weekly*, in addition to their English publication in the *Strand*. The American artist, Mr. W. H. Hyde, adorned the stories in *Harper's* with some striking pictures, but preferred to draw the actors in the criminal events rather than Holmes and Watson. The detective seldom appears, and when he does he is Mr. Hyde's own conception. One recognizes with difficulty, in this youth of the nineties with his short, light overcoat, either the cocaine addict of Baker Street or the expert boxer

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"'Pipes are occasionally of extraordinary interest,' said he." W. H. Hyde's unusual Holmes, youthful and American. Watson in the topper; Holmes in the bowler hat. Drawn for "Harper's Weekly" in 1893.

who twice knocked down Joseph Harrison, the thief of the Naval Treaty.

The *Memoirs* closed with *The Final Problem* and the "death" of Sherlock Holmes, who went over the cliffs of the Reichenbach, along with his enemy, Professor Moriarty. Nevertheless, in the autumn of 1901, the *Strand* began publication of the serial, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, with Mr. Paget again illustrating the text. Dr. Doyle wisely made no reference to the fact that for six or seven years we had supposed Holmes to be lying on the Alpine mountains cold, but went on with his hero as if nothing had happened. The novel ran in both the English and American editions of the *Strand*—the American always one instalment behind the English. This caused one reader, who began the serial in London and carried on in this country, the agonizing experience of waiting *two* months for the next instalment, after perusing the blood-curdling words: "Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!"

During the progress of this novel, and while everyone was guessing at its plot, THE BOOKMAN published some ingenious solutions contributed by excited readers, of whom I was one. They were all far astray. Mr. Arthur Bartlett Maurice told me that they were read

"Lestrade and Holmes sprang upon him like so many staghounds." George Hutchinson's conception of Holmes and Lestrade arresting Jefferson Hope. From an early edition of "A Study in Scarlet". (Ward, Lock & Co.)

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by Dr. Doyle, who intimated that they were worthy of Gregson and Lestrade.

In this story, Paget presented Holmes and Watson in their best-tailored moments. Look at them in their glossy toppers, hot on the trail of the mysterious man in the hansom cab. The people, the omnibus, and the background of the Quadrant of Regent Street make it redolent of London, and full of the spirit of these tales.

Two years later, in 1903, Holmes's loyal followers were given satisfaction with a full explanation of his supposed death, and an account of where he had been and what he had been doing. On both sides of the ocean he re-appeared in the series called *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, and in America, in *Collier's Weekly*, with the most interesting decorations of all time. Old Sherlockians will always be fond of the Paget drawings, but they must admit that the pictures made for this new series, by Frederic Dorr Steele, were not only satisfactory as portraits, but extremely attractive in detail.

The features of Holmes as drawn by Mr. Steele were clearly done under the William Gillette influence. Since 1899 Mr. Gillette had been playing Holmes, and to thousands of playgoers he had become the perfect embodiment of the detective. They had never seen any other representation, and could not imagine one. The Steele pictures had in their turn an influence on the stage, or upon the screen, for it seems probable that the enormous number of properties assembled for the Baker Street scene in John Barrymore's film play (1922) originated in Mr. Steele's fascinating pictures of Holmes's rooms and their accessories. Mr. Steele was the first illustrator to suggest that Dr. Watson was a simple Simon: he gave the Doctor an extremely blonde moustache, and a good-natured face which verges on silliness.

It was Mr. Arthur I. Keller, in the American edition of *The Valley of Fear* (1915), who dealt the cruelest blow at Watson. From merely the innocent Johnny of Mr. Steele's drawings, Watson emerges in Mr. Keller's picture as *boobus Britannicus*. *The Valley of Fear* had been illustrated in the *Strand* by Frank Wiles; it is a story of the Molly Maguires in Pennsylvania, and is one of the lesser items of Sherlockiana.

"He found Holmes leaning languidly against the mantelpiece." The Sherlock Holmes of C. R. Macauley. (McClure, Phillips & Co.)

When the stories in *The Return* were published as a book in America, Mr. C. R. Macauley drew a few pictures of Holmes. One of these, a curiously feathery person,

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"'What's this, Mr. Holmes? Man, it's witchcraft! Where in the name of all that's wonderful did you get those names?'" Arthur I. Keller draws Holmes (right) and Watson (left), representing Watson as a near-moron. Inspector MacDonald in the center. (George H. Doran Co.)

with some resemblance to William Gillette, is reproduced here.

Paget continued his pictures in the *Strand* until his death in 1908; four or five different artists followed him in his work on the Holmes stories, which went on, often at long intervals, for about seventeen years more. H. M. Brock is probably the best known of these illustrators, although he seems to have worked on one story only. The last of the *Strand* illustrators was Howard Elcock, who drew some vigorous pictures. He followed the Paget tradition as to Holmes's face. Altogether, even in this incomplete record, I have found the names of fifteen artists who have drawn Sherlock Holmes.

The stories afterwards collected in *His Last Bow* (1917) and *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes* (1927) came out in various periodicals, illustrated by different artists. "It is with a heavy heart", as Dr. Watson said in beginning *The Final Problem*, that I record my opinion that in these stories the old fire was flickering; although, as in *The Bruce-Partington Plans*, it sometimes blazed up with the warmth of the early days.

It was chiefly in the stories contained in *The Case Book* that Dr. Doyle made the contradictory statements, and committed himself to the anachronisms about his two heroes, which have given Father Ronald Knox, Mr. S. C. Roberts, and other serio-comic investigators the basis for their amusing monographs on the early life of Dr. Watson, his mysterious second marriage, and other esoteric matters.

Mentioning William Gillette's early appearance on the stage as Holmes (revived in 1929) recalls that, in England, H. A. Saintsbury played Sherlock over 1400 times. Other English actors, chiefly in the cinema, who have impersonated Holmes include Eille Norwood, whose *Hound of the Baskervilles* was given here in 1922; Clive Brook; Arthur Wontner, whose screen play was one of the best; Raymond Massey; and Dennis Neilson-Terry. Mr. Massey brought Holmes up-to-date and gave him an office with stenographers, dictaphones, radio, and typewriters. This is much like showing Washington crossing the Delaware in an airplane—very pleasing to those who love to shatter tradition into bits.

John Barrymore's film (1922) was based on the Gillette stage play and had a remarkable cast which included Roland Young as Dr. Watson; Gustav von Seyffertitz as Professor Moriarty; William Powell as Forman Wells; and Louis Wolheim as Craigin.

Recalling these pictorial representations of

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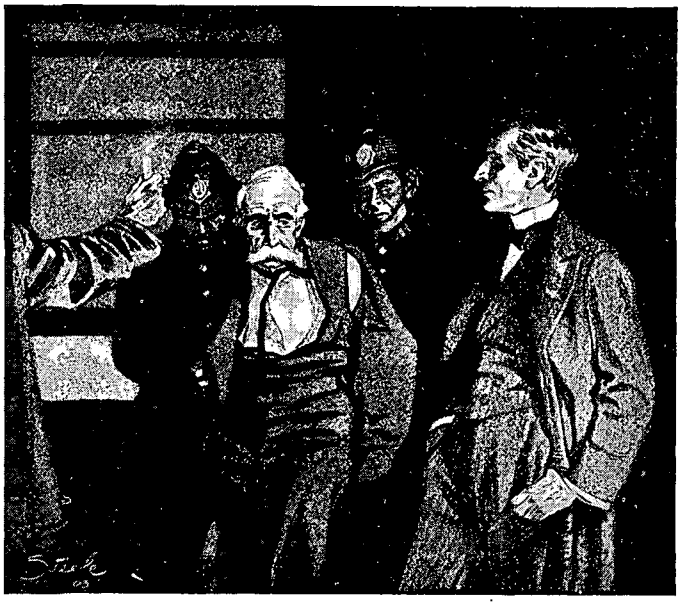
the lean detective brings back happy memories, and makes the ancient Sherlockian murmur, in the words of Old English: "Great Days! Great Days!"

Once more Holmes and Watson sit by the fire in the rooms of that patient landlady: Mrs. Hudson. Once more the dense yellow fog swirls around the window panes, until Holmes chafes at his enforced inactivity. Then Mrs. Hudson is heard toiling up the stairs; she taps on the door, to announce—what mysterious personage? The King of Bohemia, in his black mask? Mr. Jabez Wilson, with his red hair and his curious story? Brother Mycroft, puffing and wheezing, to say that the Prime Minister is quite agitated, and that Sherlock must come at once? Or some beautiful and distressed lady, to tell of an unexplained and terrible death at midnight? Perhaps this time they are really going to find out what in Heaven's name *were* the Singular Adventures of the Grice Patersons in the Island of Uffa!

Anyhow, they will soon be in a hansom together; Watson with his old service revolver in his pocket, and the thrill of adventure in his heart.

Great Days! Great Days!



"Colonel Moran sprang forward with a snarl of rage." The pictorial representation of Sherlock Holmes with which Americans are most familiar, by Frederic Dorr Steele. One notes the resemblance of Steele's Holmes to William Gillette, whose stage portrayal of the great detective preceded the drawings by a few years.

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IN MEMORIAM: GRACE KING

by Marie Elisabeth Faust

"I was a child of the Reconstruction," she told me when we were discussing Mr. Bowers's book *The Tragic Era*, a book she praised warmly; and it was that unhappy period, the Reconstruction, that she selected for her own novel *The Pleasant Ways of St. Médard,* the most distinctly southern of all her work. A young girl at the time the Civil War ended, she could well remember the untroubled days before it as well as its terrible aftermath; and so some of her reminiscences in the introduction to the *Pleasant Ways* may be quoted here.

"Do you remember, you who can remember as much as fifty years ago, when your ears hardly reached above the dinner table, the stories your elders used to tell over the wine and nuts?—stories about their time and their people, their youth and their doings; their ten, twenty, forty years ago. What stupendous elders they were! Truly to the opened eyes of the children looking up to them they were indeed as mountains walking and talking. And what stupendous tales they told of those dim prehistoric ages before our birth! What great things they had done in hunting and fishing, riding and electioneering—aye, in fighting too; with the Indians, with the British in 1812, with the Mexicans, with the Spaniards, when they went filibustering to Cuba—even in the Revolutionary War, and with Napoleon, or escaping from the insurrection of the Negroes in San Domingo. For what they did not of themselves achieve, their fathers and grandfathers achieved, and it all seemed the same to them in their stories, as it did to their listeners.

"Ah, what fathers and grandfathers they had, and what wonderful men and women they had known! The children who listened then have never met the like of them in their long life since.

"What a pleasant world that was to be sure, into which we were born fifty years ago in New Orleans; what a natural, what a simple world! Then there was but one truth, one right, that of Papa, than whom alone the Father in Heaven above was greater but hardly more feared. That tall, dignified gentleman to whom his wife said 'Sir', and his servants 'Master', whose frown was a terror to his children, and his caress an awesome favour; who descended every morning from his silent apartment, as from a cloud, to breakfast in majesty alone; to whom there was but one easy means of approach, one sure intermediary, Mamma.

"And do you remember how those great Papas of ours went to war? And how God did not act towards them as they would have acted towards Him, had they been God and He a Southern Gentleman?"

Is not that the voice of a Southerner? And I think I may say she remained unreconstructed to the end of her long life, a life that she rounded out with the completion of her reminiscences as neatly done as one of her own finished paragraphs.

Grace King will be remembered as a historian, but her studies of Creole life and

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GRACE KING
1852-1932

character in *Monsieur Motte, Madame Girard, La Dame de Sainte Hermine* and *Balcony Stories* reflect the blend of the two Latin temperaments, French and Spanish, in a manner that no other writer has yet given us.

Her interest in history drew the attention of Charles Gayarre, that historian of the French and Spanish settlements in America, when he was an old man and she a young girl, and it was no doubt this stimulating friendship that lead her to write *New Orleans, the Place and the People, DeSoto in the Land of Florida* and *A Life of Bienville.* It was from Gayarre she heard the story of the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, when Andrew Jackson met the British under General Packenham and defeated them a few miles below the city. Gayarre was then a youthful witness of this stirring event, and Miss Grace could retell the story with all the fire and vigour of an impressionable girl who had listened to an Olympian.

At her residence in Coliseum Square in the old Garden District of New Orleans, she maintained her salon until her death on January 14, 1932. Here she was at home on Friday afternoon and Sunday evening and here the visitor knew he would find good talk, interesting discussion of books, plays and politics, and delightful people. She numbered among her friends great names of the past, Henry Mills Alden, Charles Dudley Warner, Mark Twain, F. Hopkinson Smith, and George W. Cable and Richard Watson Gilder. On New Years' Day she held her last "salon" as charmingly and as graciously as ever, and spoke with glee of having finished her memoirs and sent them off to the publisher. It was indeed the record of a Southern Woman of Letters.

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"YOU, TOO, CAN BE A WRITER"

AN EXPOSURE OF LITERARY SHARP PRACTICE

Anonymous

WHEN I began my new job with the Blank Agency—a Literary Agency and Criticism Bureau—the first thing that impressed me was the extraordinary number of average people in America who write. But the second was their extraordinary willingness to be taken in by advertising ballyhoo.

My boss, who owned and operated this ingenious institution for extracting hard-earned pennies from seekers after the El Dorado of literature, was a clever little rat who had picked up the gentle art of pretending to be a mouse. He wanted me to learn the ins and outs of setting traps for the great American sucker, so I was first put to work doing ordinary criticism, revision, and marketing, just for the experience. And this is how it is done.

The Agency's advertisement in the papers and magazines announces in bold type that you, too, can write and earn a glittering income. If you have suffered, if you have known life, send us your story. Submit your manuscript to us for a *free* reading, with absolutely no cost or obligation on your part. We read your manuscript, and if it passes this first critical survey and shows possibility, we let you know. We are on the lookout for good marketable material. Perhaps you have a manuscript that is just what we want. It may merely need a little polishing to make it sell. For a small fee we will analyze your story and send you a detailed criticism within two weeks. This criticism will point out your weaknesses, stress your good points, and strike the proper critical note which you may need to develop your talent. Don't fail to take advantage of our offer, which entitles you to a free preliminary reading to determine whether or not your story has market possibilities. We have helped thousands of successful writers. Among our clients is Count X..., son or nephew of the Great Continental man of letters. We have marketed the books of many hitherto unknown story-tellers. Why can't we do the same for you?

Now this appeal is read by a stenographer a few blocks away from us, or by an ex-service man going up the line in the wheat lands of Minnesota. Or Mary Noblik out in Wisconsin or Lita Goldberg of Brooklyn may read it and decide to submit to such obviously fair and unbiased criticism. For surely, thinks Mary Noblik, it is in the interests of the Agency to select only the best material, otherwise how can the house continue to sell to publishers? According to the advertisement, there is a staff of trained men to handle all the new manuscripts. Without doubt the Blank Agency is an honest and thoroughgoing concern. Here is the opportunity for Mary.

She sends off her manuscript with a letter telling how she wrote the story with her heart's blood under the impetus of reading their kindly advertisement in the *Writer's Chronicle* or the Chicago *Blade and Ledger*. A week later she receives a reply, saying her

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story has been received and a preliminary reading will be given it immediately to determine whether or not the story has literary promise. Signed by the head of the Agency himself!

In another few days comes a second letter. Her manuscript has passed the preliminary reading and is now definitely in the class of marketable stories. It shows promise, but of course it has a certain lack of polish, and needs a little critical reworking. Let us help you discover your own talent. If you will remit a two-dollar handling fee to cover the overhead (we keep a large staff of experienced men for this work), we will go ahead at once with the detailed criticism of your story. The receipt of your two dollars will be our permission to proceed.

Well, Mary sends her two dollars. She can understand that that staff of trained men must represent an enormous expense, and she is happy because her letter was answered in person by the Big Cheese himself! That dispels any sneaking suspicion which may have risen within her. Had there been anything fishy about the Agency, the letter would surely have been a printed one, a form.

Then comes a communication saying that the work on her story is being carried forward, and if she will please remit the amount due for the work (let us say it is five dollars at so much per thousand words), the detailed analysis will be sent as soon as possible. In all probability Mary will send the five dollars. She may, however, write that she thought the two dollars covered all that; whereupon the Big Cheese replies that the two dollars was merely a handling or retaining fee, to cover the overhead of the trained assistants, while the five dollars is the cost of the actual criticism per thousand words as stated explicitly in their nationwide and reliable advertisements.

Mary is anxious not to annoy the B. C. for fear that she may prejudice him against her story. She sees that of course the error was hers, and is a little disconcerted. Since her story has gone so far, she will not ruin its chances at this stage. The money is duly sent and she waits again. But, as you can see, she has already spent more than she bargained for.

The "detailed analysis and criticism" arrives at last. She tears it open. The letter is very, very, long. It contains a fearfully clear dissertation on the technique of writing, with hints on the craft, tricks of exposition, things she never suspected had any place at all in art. Then the letter gets down to personal matters, points out the mechanical faults of her story, shows her where her dramatic situation missed fire, where her language is muddled, redundant, hackneyed. It is a revelation of faults. *But*—and here the letter becomes weighty with her future—the essential story is interesting and original; it is fresh, stimulating. In writing, this means everything. Does Miss Noblik realize how rare a gift originality is? How few writers have it? Many have style and finish and technique. They can be counted by the dozens. But the important thing in literature is what one feels. Now it is clear that Miss Noblik feels. It is obvious from her writing that Miss Noblik has suffered and yearned and known what life is. Therefore she is qualified to become a writer. Form doesn't matter. Only force and freshness count, and the desire to put over a great message, and the courage to try.

Why worry about technique? We will give you the benefit of technique at so much per thousand words. For authors in such a predicament we have designed a wonderful service. It is our Revision Service. In this collaboration with the author, we, the Agency,

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make a complete revision and correction of your story; we polish it, make it salable, prune away weak or unnecessary passages, and make two fresh carbons for your personal use. Our service is unique and thorough. It will eliminate all grammatical, rhetorical, or structural crudeness. It will give you the benefit of our long and varied experience in writing, and will make your story more popular and salable, which it is not at present despite its obvious merits.

When your story is completely revised we send you a copy for approval before marketing. Naturally we are anxious to get the best story on the market. There is no charge for our marketing service. We assume complete responsibility for sending your story out to the best publishers. We follow the market from day to day, and a story from our office is given immediate personal attention in all publishing houses. We make your manuscript conform in style and appearance to the current demand, so that we can eliminate for you the inconvenience of the mistakes which the author is bound to make through ignorance.

The cost of this Revision Service varies with the length of the manuscript. Miss Mary's, let us say, will come to only twenty dollars, because hers is a short story. Be assured, states the letter, that your personal style and outlook will not be changed. The sacred right of the author to keep his individuality is respected above all else. When the manuscript is finished and approved, we will proceed to market it. Only after the story is sold and the check forwarded to you do we get a ten per cent commission for marketing services.

Should you be unable to make this expenditure now, we should be glad to read the story again at any time, after you have revised it yourself in accordance with our detailed analysis. Our Revision Service is open to you at any time that you find convenient. Et cetera. The letter is again a personal one and is signed, as always, by the Big Cheese.

Mary Noblik reasons thus: The Agency can get nothing out of marketing until after publication. Therefore the Agency will try to make the story as good as possible, for successful revision means ten per cent of the author's check, and that should be a lot of money, because writers are so well paid. The Agency is naturally eager to get this big money, and therefore the interests of the author and Agency are one, though Mary Noblik is bound to profit a thousand times more than the Agency through the final sale of the manuscript.

She thereupon sends twenty dollars in a lump, although the letter stated that it could be paid in three instalments. And she settles down to wait once more. Sure enough, along comes the revised manuscript, although the weeks between were long for Miss Noblik. She takes it to her room and with palpitating heart tears through the story that is to place her in the van of American writers.

She recognizes the names and the major incidents, but as to improvement: there is none. The story does not hold her from the first word. It is not like the stories in the *Saturday Evening Post* or *Liberty*. It isn't like anything. There is a letter accompanying this story, hoping the revision will please you, etc., etc.

Mary is staggered. But she sends the story back to the Agency with a timid letter asking for immediate marketing. Then she hears nothing for six months. By this time her faith is somewhat less than whole, and she writes frantically for news. The return mail brings her a list of publishers by whom her story has been rejected; and at the bottom of the list is the name of one publisher with this item

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alongside: Under Consideration. Very truly, the Agency.

This time she may be mollified, but sooner or later she rebukes the Agency for being unreliable and fraudulent after having promised, in previous letters and in advertisements, to market her manuscript. There comes a cold and dignified reply to the effect that Miss Noblik is unnecessarily hasty, and that she is entirely under a misapprehension, since we have submitted her manuscript to the leading publishers and they have found it wanting. Mary writes back that she paid twenty hard-earned dollars to have them revise her story and make it salable, and she quotes liberally from their advertising copy and their letters. The Agency replies that we are paid to revise and correct material, not to contribute essential literary quality. Mary tears off a note to the effect that she was given to understand from their earlier correspondence that only stories with definite promise and market possibilities are accepted for revision, and that she has been grossly swindled.

The Agency retorts: You accepted our Revision Service *voluntarily*. If you will read over our circulars you will find that we do not guarantee publication. This would be absurd unless we were publishers ourselves, which we are not. We try to pick out manuscripts with sales possibilities, but we offer no assurance of publication. We offer Revision as a simple service which you accept voluntarily; therefore we are clear of any such charge as you bring against us in your letter. Since our service does not please you and since you do not appreciate the value of purely honest business relations, we are herewith returning your manuscript to you, and thank you.

That is the end of Mary Noblik. Of course, all cases do not end this way. In fact, the majority, in actual percentage, never get beyond the first stages of a detailed analysis. Short stories and poems are mainly in this class, whereas novels, plays, and longer stories usually go into Revision. A great number, after being revised, are sent back without talk of publication. This is because the authors are trying to learn their trade first.

There is also another service which the Agency offers: the Revision Schedule, a careful schedule or plan for suggested changes. It is made out by a member of the "staff", and the author revises the story at home according to the outline or Schedule. It costs less than a regular Revision but is not quite so popular. Most suckers like to be thoroughly punished. But the Schedules are in demand just the same, for they go under the title of Collaboration between Author and Agent!

Not every sucker wakes up so quickly as Miss Noblik. Most of them never wake up. They usually go on writing story after story in an effort to develop independent technique, and they use the Agency as a sort of *maestro* to guide them through the hard spots. Long correspondence of the most amiable character is carried on. Stories are written, dispatched, criticized, returned, and more stories sent forth again, so that the new writer may be thoroughly grounded before he crosses swords with the great god Competition. And there's gold in them there suckers! I have seen them send in a constant stream of articles, novels, short stories, plays, monographs, essays, diatribes, sermons, theses, biographies, travelogues, and just plain literature. They run the gamut from preliminary readings to Revision, keeping it up with lucrative and methodical stupidity.

These people considered themselves the future Immortals of literary America, and they graciously conferred upon the Agency a tithe of their coming immortality. They wrote interminable letters, which received the most

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careful attention. Occasionally they called in person to discuss their next book with the "Editor", or to ask his opinion on life, love, and the influences of industrialism upon internal and feminine rhymes. They included religious cranks, broken-down school teachers, office workers, over-emotional ladies with no outlet, letter carriers who have gone over the same route too long, elderly retired lecturers, and so on. Some of them were just plain people who want to write and who believe in the integrity of American ballyhoo. These need to be burned only once in order to understand the nature of fire.

The prospectus announces that Count X... is among our clients. I have seen him come into the office, a corpulent man in black broadcloth, his bald head gleaming like a buffed agate. I have seen the entire staff thrown into panic by his arrival. But as yet I have not been able to find out what books he has published, nor do I know anyone who has. There are a few others mentioned in the prospectus, and the same thing applies to them. I don't doubt the truth of our claims, for we use the United States mails and must be ready for inspection at all times. But since these already famous clients are so obscure, it is most likely that future and less distinguished clients will remain equally obscure. And the reason for this will be clear as soon as the inside machinery of the Agency is revealed.

II

The Agency's literary staff is divided into two departments: the staff proper, the "highly trained and competent writers" of the prospectus; and the typists. The typists outnumber the writers two or even three to one. The writers are at best a pathetic lot of college students who cannot get a better job and slave away for fifteen dollars a week doing the meanest possible kind of work for a person who has any sense of honour. During my time at the Agency they were getting twenty a week because times were very good. That was before the current depression. In addition to these two "literary" departments was the Correspondence Department, which consisted of myself. This job was the dirtiest of them all, except that of the boss himself, who originated this little scheme and lovingly watched it grow into a well organized machine for abstracting money from many thousands of poor fools. A knowledge of the relations between these three departments is most essential to a clear notion of how the Agency moves its wonders to perform.

A story comes from a farmer in Kansas. He says that he has read our attractive offer in the newspaper, that he is a poor man because the crops failed this year, and that he hopes by making a little money on the side to be able to assure himself of the bare necessities of life. He wants to sell his story, and feels that our preliminary reading will help him avoid unnecessary expenditures in case the story is not up to market standards. The man's handwriting is pitiful, and he writes on the cheapest scrap paper. He is anxiously awaiting the results of our free preliminary reading.

Well, we read the story over: that is, a secretary makes out a folder for the farmer, notes the name, date, address, name of story, number of words, as well as the type of manuscript (story, poem, article, etc.). This is the free preliminary reading. After preliminary reading, all stories are accepted. Only hand-written manuscripts are returned, with a request that they be typed, and poems under a certain length. Other material is automatically filed and cross-indexed.

Now that the story has been read and found

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up to market standard, the farmer receives a letter telling him the grand news. It is a personal letter, obviously not a form. Thus the shrewd farmer knows his story has been given personal attention. How is it possible to write personal letters in acknowledgment of so many new manuscripts pouring in daily? Easy. A secretary puts the story and the man's folder on my desk, where it awaits me. I read the farmer's letter, and mark it immediately with a cipher. The office boy takes it from my desk to the typing department. The typist has on her desk a book of letter forms. She sees the cipher on the letter, opens in her book to the form indicated by the cipher, and types off a fresh copy of it, addressed to the farmer in Kansas: We have received your story which we have read and found worthy of a detailed analysis by the Editor. It is an interesting story, etc. And the farmer is tactfully asked for the two-dollar handling fee to cover that "overhead" caused by four pitiful college students. The farmer is bewildered, but figures that it costs two dollars, though he can't figure out why it costs so little, since it should be four dollars at so much per thousand words. He sends the two dollars. Or he may immediately see the sense of overhead and handling costs. There is the signature of the Editor in ink. No fake. The signature is made by the Big Cheese's secretary. The Editor is the same person as the B.C. He is everybody around the place.

When the two-dollar payment is received, I make an entry and then mark his letter with another cipher which indicates to the typist that she is to send him another form letter, personally typed, thanking him for the money and telling him that the detailed analysis will be sent immediately upon completion. It looks like a personal letter. That's why our typing staff is our real overhead and our trained literary men are a mere drop in the bucket.

Now let us take a look at the evolution of the criticism proper. The man on the literary staff is handed the manuscript with the information that it is the first manuscript from this farmer. He puts a piece of paper in his typewriter, writes the name of the farmer, the date, the name of the story, the number of words, and what kind of story it is. Then he reads it. He reads it so quickly that until I did the work myself I suspected him of trickery. However, I know from personal experience that one can read any number of manuscripts a day and still have time for a game of craps when the boss isn't snooping around. One can compose interesting criticisms without more than a glance at the story under consideration. A look at the opening paragraph tells you whether the man is literate or knows his grammar, whether he is pompous or simple. You jot down a note about his style and then bound through the story, noting here and there characteristic errors. If there are none you complain of the tone, whatever that is, and you find some structural fault. But as a rule you choose either style or structure to criticize, since all the criticisms fall into one of those two classes.

The average criticism is half a page long, unless the manuscript happens to be a novel, in which case it may be even two pages long. On the page you indicate by a cipher whether the criticism is to be of style or structure. Then you type in caps this very pretty word: INTERPOLATION. And under that you write your criticism. It must show that you have read the story, it must have references to specific things in the story, and it needn't be at all comprehensive. It merely has to impart a weightiness and importance to the page. The office boy collects it with the other criti-

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cisms on your desk and takes it to the typist. She glances at the cipher, which tells her the form to use—style or structure. In her notebook she finds the one indicated and proceeds to copy it afresh on her machine. She addresses the letter personally to the farmer, and she knows this criticism form practically by heart. At a certain point she stops and copies your INTERPOLATION. These two or three short paragraphs are the detailed analysis of the story.

The letter finishes with a few paragraphs exhorting the recipient to the labour of love in literature, and broaches the subject of a Revision. The entire critique is several pages long, and seems to cover all the art of story-telling. But it is all form, worked out carefully and systematized by the little Big Cheese, and the only thing original in it is the interpolation by the poor college student. It arrives in Kansas as a personal letter, signed by the B.C. Personal? So are Christmas cards!

I forgot to mention that before the detailed analysis is finished, the farmer is asked to remit the cost of criticism, as per the rates advertised in all magazines and our prospectus. Only when this has arrived is the analysis sent to him. The manuscript remains on file with the agency, because a manuscript on file is worth two in Kansas, and while we have your story you are much more likely to believe that wealth and riches are in store for you. This is good business psychology.

The farmer is dazzled at the critical fireworks called forth by his humble manuscript. He does not notice that two and a half of the three pages are purely generalized, like fortune readings in a gypsy booth; and that only one or two paragraphs are specific.

Suppose the farmer writes in to say he doesn't understand what the Revision is all about, or he has some complaint. His letter lands on my desk. I read it, mark a cipher at the top, and the typist copies the form from her book of letters and paragraphs. It looks personal. It is—because there are so many letters of this kind to be written that we were able to compile a whole book full of letters, sentences, and paragraphs which will apply to every possible condition, complaint, and complication. When a letter requires four or five paragraphs that are in the book, and one item which is not in the book, my ciphers read something like this:

Dear Mr. So-and-so:
No. 1
No. 2
No. 6
Sentence (pertaining to the individual case)
No. 9
No. 7 Yours truly,

Each number indicates a paragraph which the typist copies from her book. Each typist has a book of paragraph and letter forms. There are always new situations, so that the correspondent has to create new paragraphs each week, but as a rule most situations are completely covered. When a very unusual complication occurs, I usually write out the entire letter. Of course, before sending out any letter, no matter how simple, I go through the folder of the client, so that I do not repeat anything said before, or make any other dangerous error which might land us in a pretty kettle with a client who is on the look-out for fraud. That is why so much depends on the correspondence desk.

When a man sends in a second story, his preliminary reading report must not be the same as the first, or he will suspect something fishy. So at the head of his letter I mark a cipher meaning preliminary report number two. Or it may be three or four. After a

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certain number we start sending him freely composed replies which I make by asking the literary staff what sort of stuff this man writes. I acknowledge his latest in such a manner as to make him feel at home. There is no more talk of preliminaries. He is a client whose agent we have become in earnest, and we behave as though we were Alfred Knopf and the author were Branch Cabell. Which is an excellent business tack. Of course, the more complicated our relations are with a client, the more carefully does the correspondent read through the folder each time. But after a while one acquires proficiency in such matters and can go through a folder of a year's correspondence in a few minutes. The carbons of the letters we send out are in the folder as well, so there is rarely an error.

Accidents happen, however. Through a carelessness of mine a housewife in San Francisco received for her second detailed analysis the same form which she had received for her first. She went into the air and threatened to expose us as frauds. We sent her money back in a hurry and told her that she had been sent some one else's criticism. She was not taken in but the refund helped to calm her investigatory zeal. The course of true swindling does not run smooth.

I spent days working and sweating to get us out of tight holes, where our sole defense in court would have been a letter so carefully worded that it could have easily withstood a legal barrage but was designed to lead the client down the wrong track. It was no easy task to write some of those letters. They had to be fool-proof in a court of law, and they had to have a persuasive effect upon the fool who wanted to get rid of his money. When a woman wrote reasonable complaints that we were tricking her out of her money with false promises of publication, we could show her conclusively that this was a misapprehension that lay in her brain. And this was no easy task, for the logic and the decency were all on her side, besides the fact that she wrote heart-breaking letters about her poverty.

Some of those people who scraped up a hundred dollars for a Revision were in debt for years as a result of believing our circulars. But we could show consistently that nowhere in all our tricky correspondence had we actually promised anything of the sort. If you assume that publication will follow on Revision, the error is yours, dear dupe, not in our advertising. We do try to sell your manuscript after Revision, and a letter or a visit to the publishers will show that the manuscript has been rejected by them. The implication in our prospectus that Revision means sure marketing does not bind us in court. We work, it is true, on a very narrow margin of ethics, but no one need go into that. Your mistake was in thinking that we make our living by the ten per cent marketing commission. We do get ten per cent if we are fortunate enough to sell a book, which has been known to happen. But our real source of income is the two dollar handling fee, the rated fees for detailed analysis *by the Editor*, and the fancy charges for Revision and Revision Schedules. Whose fault is it that you mistook the fountain of our income? Count X... so alluringly written up in our prospectus? The other half-dozen obscure writers who have sold a tenth-rate book to a third-rate publisher through our medium? Alas, dear dupe, two dollars multiplied by twenty thousand fools yields more than ten per cent taken five times a year. The court clears us, our correspondence is open and above board.

But the business of the correspondent is to see that nothing ever gets to court. When

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a paralytic down in Georgia writes a mad letter to me, saying that he is under the finger of God and that he has reached his last pinnacle but God willing he will achieve his end despite the fact that his friends have thrown him into the street and that his last cent was spent on postage to send us the manuscript, it is nothing short of criminal to ask him for a two dollar handling fee. Somehow the wretch gets it together and sends it, under the impression that it will cover the cost of the analysis. His story shows definite psychopathic tendencies, and his script is that of an unbalanced man. He writes that he has heart disease and cannot exert any effort for fear of dropping dead, but the Agency asks him for five dollars to cover the cost of a criticism. He goes into the air about it, calls all kinds of curses down on our heads and gets some kind friend to investigate our fraud. He proclaims that he is an honest man, and that we have fooled him into thinking we were a straightforward Agency interested in helping writers, and his friend writes that we have tried to swindle an innocent old man who is trembling on the verge of insanity and complete physical collapse—and the friend adds that he will have us investigated for using the U.S. mails to defraud innocent Americans.

In such a case a scandal would not do. My job is to smooth the whole matter over artfully by letters and if possible to get more money out of the imbecile in Georgia. Those are my boss's orders, and if I am caught cheating I lose my job. Some day an imbecile may win, but meanwhile there is many an innocent daily led to slaughter.

A PORTFOLIO

CONVERSATIONS IN THE SOUTH

by Derek Patmore

THE Miramar Bar at Cannes. The tinkling of cocktail shakers and glasses mingle gaily with the chatter of Society as it sits drinking cocktails on the terrace of the Miramar Hotel as the sun sets over the Esterel.

Over at that table sits a famous politician talking to a world-famed beauty. In another corner a celebrated French actress is deep in conversation with an American film star. I find that many people are glancing at my table because I am drinking cocktails with Michael Arlen. And Michael Arlen might well be called the uncrowned king of Cannes!

"I'm through with women in love," declares Arlen seriously. "My new novel is about politics. Young writers all go through a period when they have to write about Women. And I suppose most young men look through the pages of the society magazines and see photographs of lovely women to whom they would like to make love! But it's only a phase. People seem to forget that I'm *really* a serious writer. After all, the man who really encouraged me and made me write was D. H. Lawrence, and my first job

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was writing serious articles for the *New Age*.

Just then a beautiful woman passes by our table and bows graciously to Arlen. He smiles and remarks to me after she has passed: "It's wonderful how fame improves a man's looks!" That remark is characteristic of Michael Arlen. He has no delusions about his success. Underneath the gay man of the world is the real Arlen, who knows what it is to be poor and who has worked incessantly since he was seventeen.

"Why do you live in Cannes?" I asked him later on.

"Well, my wife likes it. All her relations live here, and I like to be able to watch crowds." And with a gesture at the people around us: "Here one sees the most beautiful women in the world! Still, I hate being tied down to a place so we've only taken our villa for six years. I dislike possessions".

Talking of success, Arlen went on to say: "Young writers should try to be central. They should move in all circles and be in the center of events. My novel *The Green Hat* was a success because it came at the right moment. Unconsciously, I wrote the book the world wanted at that moment. If it were published today I doubt whether it would repeat its great success".

"So you're writing a political novel?"

"Yes, I am profoundly interested in politics. We must be, in times of crisis."

However, the subject on which Arlen really likes to talk is his son, John Michael Arlen. "My sinister baby," as he calls him!

When I asked him about his life in Cannes he said: "I'm very content. I'm married. We live quietly at our villa on the hill, and I've got a son. I don't want to entertain a lot of people at my house. I live there quietly with my family and work. And I work regularly every day; it's the only way to write".

Fame has not spoilt Michael Arlen.

II

A luncheon at Mougin's, high above Cannes. Our hostess, the charmingly witty "Elizabeth" sits in her drawing-room, curved to follow the sun, receiving her guests. Most of them have arrived, and include a well known portrait painter, a young Austrian, and a lovely Irishwoman with Titian red hair. "H. G. is coming," murmurs our hostess. "I can't think why he is so late!" We all look pleased. H. G. Wells is coming to lunch too. It is the finishing touch to a very pleasant gathering of people.

"Elizabeth", or Countess Russell, as she is known to her friends, is a born hostess. She has the rare gift of making her guests feel at home and at their ease directly they enter her house.

"You know, I'm English," she laughed, "although I wrote *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*." And there is a quality essentially English about this lovely lady with her exquisitely modelled head, her candid blue eyes, and quiet penetrating remarks. Only England could create the gracious atmosphere that pervades these rooms, which although they look out on to groves of olives and beds of jasmine, remind one of the English country houses with their old books and pictures and profusion of flowers.

Suddenly there is a commotion in the garden, and a genial but rather flurried little man comes into the room through one of the French windows. It is H. G. Wells.

"I'm sorry I'm late, but my car broke down," he explains. And going to the window and pointing to the road below: "There's the little beast!"

"H. G. drives a car as if he were wrestling with an enemy!" remarks one of his friends. We all laugh and go in to lunch.

Later, sitting on the shaded terrace of the

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villa looking out across the hills and the Mediterranean, the party idly basks in the sunshine and talks. It is so easy to talk in the South. Life seems very easy with blue skies overhead.

Ironically enough a mosquito bite started the real conversation! I said, scratching an inflamed arm, "God shouldn't have *made* insects!" Wells, who was sitting next to me made no answer. I thought: "Perhaps he scorns such childish peevishness". Then after a minute he said: "Have you read your Bible?"

"Yes—"

"Well, it's funny how it shows character. God is awfully like men. He often gets excited, and doesn't know when to stop." The rest of the party sat up and listened, for who can talk better than H. G. Wells? "God started off beautifully with his creation. The sea and the fishes were all right; there's nothing wrong with them—they're splendid! And the earth is very nice, but then he should have had a rest! He had done quite enough—more than enough. But he got started on the insects and then his wife—"

"He's got a wife?" I exclaimed indignantly.

"Of course he has! He gives all the signs of being a married man. Well, she kept on bothering him to come to luncheon, and he simply couldn't stop creating, and said: 'Just a moment, darling', or 'Don't bother me!' and went on and on. Insect after insect. Getting quite excited about it and trying all kinds of different ways of making them. So you see he got muddled—"

Wells paused and sighed. And then looking out across the plains below us said happily: "But God did better with men and women. . . ." Another pause. Then: "No, they're a greater muddle than the insects but there's nothing to be done about *them*!"

Suddenly remembering about the recalcitrant car on the road below, "H. G." got up and began walking up and down the terrace. A little later he turned to me and said: "I can't keep still. I wish I could just be quiet and watch flowers, people, and animals—there are hundreds of things I want just to look at. But somehow I start on things and can't stop!" which seems to me a very good explanation of H. G. Wells's genius.

This charming genial little man can't leave the world alone because he loves it too much.

III

"Now you know why I won't live in England," said Richard Aldington as we sat on the verandah of his villa at Le Canadel, and looked right down into the Mediterranean and out to the Iles d'Or lying across the horizon. "This part of the coast has always been kindly to me. I wrote the first part of *Death Of A Hero* on that island out there, and most of *The Colonel's Daughter* in a villa a few miles west of this place."

Looking at the sparkling blue sea and cloudless sky, I said: "In a way it's strange that you should write about the War and English village life under these southern skies".

"Not a bit. It seems very natural to me. If you write about things on the spot it's mere reporting. I like to use only assimilated experience, and to arrange it imaginatively. Here, I can see things and events in their true perspective. It depresses me to live in England. We seem to have learned nothing from the War, and until the old men and the old régime are swept away I can see little hope for the country.

"England has got to realize that she is no longer the only great world power. . . . But to cheer ourselves up let's have a glass of

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champagne. I've got a bottle on ice. And now let me divulge a gastronomic secret. There is nothing more delicious than a glass of cool, very dry champagne before dinner. As I have often said, it cleans the palate, uplifts the heart, and beats all the cocktails in the world!"

"Another reason for living in France!" I added, and he laughed. There is something very boyish and attractive about Richard Aldington. Those people who imagine him as a rather dry and anaemic intellectual would be surprised to meet this handsome athletic man with his fair hair and clear blue eyes.

Talking about England, which in reality he loves as passionately as any Englishman, he said: "I can't bear this insane worship of sport. I maintain that a writer doesn't need much exercise. There is nothing more physically tiring than writing. It's exercise in itself! I'm very fond of swimming, but that's about the only exercise I take and yet I'm very fit!"

However, although he enjoys good food and good wines, and he can be as gay and human as anyone, Aldington takes life very seriously.

"People have attacked my last novel, *The Colonel's Daughter,* as a cruel and unfair picture of England," he went on to say, "and yet to me Georgie, the heroine, is a figure of tragedy. I really am quite a feminist at heart. I am intensely sorry for the women of England. I think they had a pretty wretched deal in the last century. I have seen all too many 'Georgies' wandering about this coast."

"Well, what would you do with England if you were given the chance?" I asked.

Aldington looked out across the sea, and thought for a little while; and then he said: "First of all, I would give the youth of the country a chance. I would place men of thirty and forty in the highest positions—they have the energy and experience the country needs.

"I would keep places of entertainment open on Sundays. In fact, I should try to do away with that awful English Sunday! I should try to run the country for the good of the whole race and not just for a privileged few. I suppose"—he laughed—"I should try to make it a country fit for intelligent men and women to live in!"

LITERARY NOTE

by Baron Ireland

If Bernard Shaw could write such amorous notes
Upon a diet of string beans and oats
While actually seeing (lovesick dunce)
His Ellenest Belovedest only once
In thirty years, conceive his lustful heat
If he instead had dined each day on meat!
Passion, inflamed by steak instead of rice,
Might even have driven him to see her twice.

THE CURB MARKET

by Alan Devoe

THERE is another Curb Market than that devoted to transactions in stocks and securities. The second market is not so well known. Indeed it is scarcely known at all.

Its location is the north-east corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, just outside the Schulte cigar store, on the Forty-second Street side. It has been established on this spot for more than a quarter of a century, and it may be described, in a formal fashion it has never cared to adopt, as The Curb

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Market of the Booksellers and Itinerant Bibliophiles.

New York has a generous quota of bookstores, and of booksellers who operate from offices and similar fixed premises. But also, in far greater numbers than these, it has an army of roving "book-scouts", as they call themselves—men wise in bookish lore who wander ceaselessly from bookshop to bookshop, from buyer to buyer, combing the Fourth Avenue bookstalls for bargain first editions, tramping from Scribner's to Dutton's to Brentano's in an endeavour to sell them. These are the men who, for more than twenty-five years, have held office-hours daily at one o'clock on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street. "The Curb Exchange" is their own name for it.

The career of "book-scout" has attracted men of various classes. For the most part they are of humble origin. Some have been salesmen, some farmers, some clerks, before the innate passion of bibliophily led them to make it a profession. Racially, the Jews predominate.

Chief requisites of the book-scout are a knowledge of rare books and first editions, a card-index mind and sturdy leg-muscles. Not only is his acquaintance with books encyclopaedic in its scope, but also, through the years, he memorizes names and addresses of hundreds of collectors. He knows what each collector wants, and what each dealer has to sell. He knows what buyers pay cash and how much they will pay. The purpose of The Curb Market is to furnish a forum where the scouts may exchange knowledge gleaned during the day, ascertain what Mr. So-and-so is buying and what Mr. Such-and-such is offering for sale.

Perhaps the most regularly attendant member of the Exchange is the little man with the beaming German smile, the twinkly eyeglasses and the infallibly jolly manner. I do not think he would like me to give his name, so, as is the custom, we will call him something else: Mr. Bernhardt. Mr. Bernhardt has been a bookseller for more than forty years. He used to have a little office, but a Bohemian temperament embodying a fine carelessness about money has made him, at sixty-six, a member of the Curb. He has no superior in New York where the knowledge of books is concerned, but today he scurries about the town from morning to night, picking up a dollar here and borrowing another there, unendingly affable, garrulous and lovable. Mr. Bernhardt, thirty years ago, was a well-known figure in Bohemian circles, buying beers for the crowd on the proceeds of some lucky sale, hobnobbing with many a prominent literary man. At sixty-four the gentle old fellow, silvered of hair and professorial of mien, was sentenced to a term on Welfare Island for selling a book on his premises which was alleged to be obscene. Many of the big bookshops sold copies of the same book, but it was Bernhardt who was caught, Bernhardt who "did time" on the Island. Since that experience he has lost none of his bubbling good-humour, but his spirit has altered. He no longer desires a shop of his own, and is content to make a precarious livelihood on The Curb. Each day he makes his rounds of the shops, and each day he is a little older and it grows a little harder to earn the price of his lunch at the Automat. Were Mr. Bernhardt ever to be made a cinematic subject, Jean Hersholt would be a "natural" for the part.

A picturesque, if less regular, frequenter of The Curb is Mr. Gridley. Mr. Gridley's full name is (with slight alteration) James Fitzwilliam Montagu Gridley; it appears in full on his cards. At seventy-odd Mr. Gridley's hair is still black and abundant; his

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moustache is superbly waxed; a silk cord depends from his eyeglasses; the sportive fedora tilts over his left ear. The crowds passing Mr. Gridley in the street take him for a European nobleman.

Mr. Gridley has ever been a specialist. He sells only the most expensive books, and interviews only the wealthiest buyers. In his field he is an undoubted genius. His careful costuming (with manners to match) has obtained for him interviews with personages who are considered by most salesmen to be absolutely unreachable. He has sauntered into the offices of millionaires and sold them books for thousands of dollars, after a ten-minute conversation. Before he sold books, Mr. Gridley was a blue-sky stock promoter, which may explain it.

More excessively Bohemian than Mr. Bernhardt, Mr. Gridley has always had luxurious tastes. He stays at the most expensive hotels, wears the smartest jewelry and seldom pays any bills whatever. There are pieces of Mr. Gridley's luggage reposing in virtually every first-class hotel east of the Mississippi. Mention his name to the credit-manager when registering and you are instantly an object of the most horrid suspicion.

Mr. Gridley's watch is in pawn here; his dress-clothes are in pawn in Cleveland; his steamer-trunk is still in the Nationale in Havana. Withal Mr. Gridley preserves unaltered his plutocratic and baronial manner. He is the only man of my acquaintance who ever slept for three nights on a Bryant Park bench wearing full evening dress.

Lately, succumbing to his lifelong passion for whisky, Mr. Gridley has been in a bad way financially. But a few days ago I noticed that he had come out of his speakeasy retirement, found a tailor to press his suit and clean his double-breasted waistcoat on credit, and was once more on The Curb. Chill weather usually goads Mr. Gridley to activity; undoubtedly within a fortnight he will have negotiated some fabulous sale and will be on his way to the cheerier Caribbean, to idle in the sunshine, bestow huge tips and imbibe planter's punches until, with the advent of spring, he must return to New York (leaving his trunk and a wake of creditors) to stand on The Curb and borrow dimes for whisky.

Not all the book-scouts have the eccentric individuality of a Bernhardt or a Gridley. There is Mr. Feinstein, grubby, unshaven, unwashed. He buys and sells books and there is nothing else to be said about him. You take a book from him and give him money; or he takes a book from you and he gives you money. He is a portable bookshelf, rather soiled. As a human being he does not exist.

Mr. Gutzman exists, but only as a loud, thick voice and a pair of large waving hands. He knows nothing about books. He operates on the simple system of paying no more than five cents for any volume and selling nothing for less than a dollar. This singularly primitive business principle enables Mr. Gutzman to pay seven dollars a week for his furnished room in Brooklyn, eat three meals daily and spend probably fifty dollars annually for clothing. It is rather remarkable.

None of the members of The Curb Exchange resemble other kinds of business men. All have a Bohemian streak; many are, to greater or less extent, poets or artists; several have published books. But there is something in their blood that impels them to deal in books; in this occupation only are they content. They have no offices or shops, and they keep no accounts. Nine out of ten of them do not know whether they are operating at a profit or loss. If only the day bring three meals and sufficient surplus for carfare, life is satisfactory and the career of book-scout am-

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ply remunerative. Some manage to subsist by making small sales every day; others, like Mr. Gridley, endeavour to carry out a few sales of substantial size at judicious intervals, living in the grand manner while the money lasts and living by their wits the rest of the time. But, while the methods and techniques differ, it may be said of every one of the book-scouts, from the bedraggled Mr. Feinstein to the ineffable Mr. Gridley, that they are all part poet and all magnificently impractical and all a great deal happier than stock-brokers.

The Curb Exchange has existed a quarter of a century; I think it will endure at least that long again. There will always be men in whom is admixed that odd blend of artist, business-man and bum, which draws them to book-scouting, and to their office-hours on The Curb Exchange.

IN A CHARABANC

R-B-RT BR-WN-NG'S VERSION OF A. E. HOUSMAN'S "BREDON HILL"

by Hugh Kingsmill

A fine hill, that, sir! Roomy spot
  To fodder sheep, you say?
That's how it strikes you? Well, why not?
  You see it just to-day.

But I . . . Your pardon whilst I blow.
  Spring brings the old catarrh.
My snuffling discommodes you? No?
  Thank you—how kind you are!

That hill, sir, has a boldish bluff.
  You'd hardly think the crest
Affords a level couch enough
  For panting folk to rest.

Our Sunday couch one spring. Church bells
  Pealed useless from the plain.
And steeples, jumped from hidden dells,
  Solicited in vain.

They buried her that winter. Springs
  Hurt since. There's no excuse,
Pestering strangers with such things.
  May I? Catarrh's the deuce!

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OUR WRITERS AND THE DEMOCRATIC MYTH

by Horace Gregory

In 1930 literary criticism in America took on a self-consciously serious tone. The time had come to rebury the dead, and the first funeral was that of the nineteen-twenties. Chief among those to be cremated and deposited within a vault was H. L. Mencken, whose influence had been dwindling for the previous five years and whose hearty, beer-garden laughter now had a curiously empty sound. Within the Mencken school there were many others marked for burial; Sinclair Lewis and Dreiser were permitted to survive only because of their innate vitality and the scope of their social criticism, but the lesser realists were slaughtered. Joseph Hergesheimer, James Branch Cabell, Carl Van Vechten, the "sophisticated romantics" mentioned by Vernon Louis Parrington, were shoved into the funeral pyre without further ceremony. What, then, was to happen to the three poets of the period whose philosophy so closely approximated certain phases of Mencken's articulated dogma? What was to be done with Vachel Lindsay, Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg? For the most part they were ostentatiously ignored, and if not ignored, merely forgotten. It was indeed almost embarrassing to remember them at all, for they had been leaders in the 1912 poetic renaissance that had swept the country; and their popularity had run so high that it was now indecent to expose their remains, to call attention to the unread editions of their latest books and to their rapidly emptying lecture halls. Only their chief and critic, H. L. Mencken, still stood above the ruins.

In 1926 Mr. Mencken published his *Notes on Democracy*. Here was a subject dear to his heart, a gorgeous opportunity for his wit and for the mordant satire with which he was accustomed to flay his people. The book should have been his masterpiece, should have been his final declaration to the mob. It was instead a huge and significant failure, as significant as the long-heralded autobiography of Mark Twain—that hardy, acrobatic mouse, advertised for his lion-like ferocity, who crept out of a mountain. For the first time it became evident that Mr. Mencken was not and never had been the glorious Zarathustra of his youth. Siegfried and Nietzsche turned out to be merely disguises that he had worn to hide the "plain cloth" garments of Thomas Jefferson. In a word, H. L. Mencken was far more a part of an American tradition than his critics (or himself) cared to admit—and that tradition is the Jeffersonian ideal of aristocratic libertarianism. He is chief mourner at its grave, and he is not content to be merely the most important figure in the company of mutes, but is eager to raise his voice in the first dirge.

Throughout the book a subtle distinction —not always clear to Mr. Mencken's followers—is made between the democrat (or the individual lost in the mob) and the libertarian. "It takes quite as long to breed a libertarian as it does to breed a race-horse," says

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Mr. Mencken, and it is the libertarian whom he admires and with whom he identifies himself. The libertarian, of course, is one aspect of the Jeffersonian myth, the ghost of the bland aristocrat who could afford to dismiss the hard-headed policies of Hamilton and Wall Street, the shade of the tall and handsome gentleman who rode alone to the White House on his inauguration day, who would have none of your fine inaugural balls, no titles; plain Mr. Jefferson in plain cloth was quite enough for him. It is easy to see why this aspect of the legend appealed to Mr. Mencken, to recognize how Jefferson combined the qualities of the perfect plantation owner, master of Monticello, with all the likable qualities of Rousseau's natural man. He could well afford that rarest of all human luxuries, the daily habit of viewing wealth and the details of its acquisition with an Olympian air of detachment.

From this symbol and this aspect of the legend springs Mr. Mencken's scorn for Mr. Lewis's Babbitt and his belief that "government under democracy is thus government by orgy" and that the mob has no conception of liberty. But before he concludes even the shortest paragraph in his castigation of American society, we see the contradiction in his symbol and in his thinking—the contradiction between Jefferson the aristocratic libertarian and Jefferson the democratic idealist; and this contradiction is important because it appears repeatedly with individual variations in the work of his three contemporaries: Lindsay, Masters, and Sandburg.

II

When Vachel Lindsay paid his visit to English lecture halls, London critics accepted him as a genuine homespun American product; to Europeans he was a curiosity from the distant and remarkable Middle West. They were not wrong, for he was a living example of what the American small town had to offer in the way of crude and seemingly inexhaustible vitality. He was born in Springfield, Illinois, where he died some months ago. Behind him lay the full expanse of a Puritan culture thinly spread over the broad plains of Illinois.

At the turn of the century, Middle Western communities hailed the second coming of a Henry Ward Beecher. In this case the hero was William Jennings Bryan, a silver-tongued Lochinvar from the West. He was all this and more—a young David, the boy defender of the "common people" hot foot after Goliath, a mysterious giant called "big business". In Bryan Lindsay found his vague dreams of a social philosophy taking form. Here was the hero; there was no need for further investigation of a troublesome problem. He became converted to Bryan's doctrine of free silver with all the religious fervour that has since marked the writing of Upton Sinclair. Like Bryan he was to make himself a spokesman of the small town, the population of a "real" America, classless and free. He became a hobo going from door to door, from farm house to village, singing his songs and reciting his childlike, fanciful stories. In those days, for they were the days of twenty years ago, the profession of tramping was not without romantic glamour. You were a useless, idle fellow but you were (supposedly) a tramp by choice; there was nothing ominous in your strange behaviour. Lindsay's *Handy Guide for Beggars* tells the story of how he set out to revive the tradition of the ballad singer and the minstrel in a land whose conception of mediaeval Europe was derived from schoolbook editions of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. And he was singing songs not to rich men and

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fine ladies, the privileged and the educated, but to the respectable poor of the American Bible Belt, to farmers and their wives, who would gladly give him a hand-out at the back door.

It is significant that when Lindsay realized the potential power of the motion picture (sweet Mary Pickford, innocent and poor, a translation of the Cinderella story into the vulgate of that glorious Wild West where "flower-fed Buffaloes" thundered no more) he deified that power. To Lindsay the movie was the voice of inarticulate America and he could do no less than write a book about his great discovery. His book (now quite unreadable) quickly congealed into a formless mass of soggy mysticism. But behind its platitudes, behind the naïve effort to say something profound, smouldered a genuine if unreasoned belief in the righteousness of popular taste.

As if to prove his intuitive convictions, the audience for his poems grew. Soon he was no longer tramping from door to door but speaking grandly from a lecture platform. Now confident of success, he exhibited a new talent for showmanship and used it with the same zeal that inspired his master, the boy orator from the prairies whose speech about the "Cross of Gold" still echoed over the wheat fields of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. To many of his hearers, Lindsay became the personification of the Middle Western farm boy, quaint and amusing, an eloquent barbarian who refreshed the stale appetites of the rich women who frequented poetry recitals in large cities. His evangelism took fire and his championship of the Anti-Saloon League was not the least of the extravagant gestures that contributed to his growing reputation.

There is an element of pathos in Lindsay's subsequent sharp decline from popularity. The tom-tom rhythms of his poetry soon filled his most friendly critics with a sense of monotony; one knew exactly what Lindsay was going to say next. The very technique that he had made his own (a combination of the music of the calliope with a variation of cake-walk jazz) could not carry a theme large enough to catch the attention of the generation which followed his. His decline in critical and popular favour was accompanied by a shift in the character of his idealism. His vision of "the common people" paled. His adulation of Andrew Jackson, Lincoln, and Bryan changed to a little-red-schoolhouse worship of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. He had become bewildered and a little despairing: surely there is no more pathetic document than his outcry against Babbittry which appeared in the *American Mercury* under the title of *The Virginians Are Coming Again*. As his audience dwindled he became prematurely old, a shadow of the poet who wrote *The Congo, The Chinese Nightingale,* and *The Eagle Forgotten*. What had happened to his sunny, corn-fed America, where every barefooted Middle Western boy had a chance to split rails, study law and the Bible, and then finally walk triumphant up the steps of the White House into the President's chair? It had been conquered by Babbitts:

> Babbitt sold Judas. Babbitt sold Christ.
> Babbitt sold everything under the sun.

Lindsay had turned to the symbols of Washington and Jefferson as a refuge from his own "common people" now grown into industrialists, automobile salesmen, bankers. It was a disastrous retreat for him, a strong indication that his confidence in democracy, if not blasted, was in one of the later stages of decay.

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It is but one short step from the later Lindsay to the early Edgar Lee Masters. Long before Lindsay had entered his decline Masters had begun where Lindsay was to make his final stand. Again we have the background of the small Middle Western town with Masters playing the rôle of a Main Street atheist, an inverted patriot. He resented bitterly the narrow world so artfully hidden behind broad streets and seductively wide lawns where family skeletons danced in the midnight shade of tall elms and maples. Unlike Mencken, he had no stomach for whatever humour came to the surface of the scene around him.

Despite his mistrust of the heroes who must have captured his imagination during his boyhood, Masters could not move forward without erecting new heroes to take the places of the old. From this point onward he conceived a melodrama in which the good are murdered or tricked into obscurity by those who join their forces with the powers of evil. He had a boyish admiration for Roosevelt and an equally boyish hatred for Mark Hanna and William McKinley. In general the black Republicans were villains and the tradition of Southern Democracy was a lily-fingered Ophelia—a bit insane, but always innocent. And Masters himself was Hamlet, wrapped in a frock coat.

The eloquence that produced *Spoon River* and *The Domesday Book* soon dropped below the standard of honest, clear-headed social criticism. It was later to degenerate into a facile and childish cynicism of the sort that often inspires the average newspaper man talking full blast in a New York speakeasy. Within a few years Masters became a Tom Paine Cassandra shouting a prophecy of destruction to the four corners of the American continent—and there was no bottom to the well of bitterness in which he cooled his hatred of capitalist society, prohibition, and the ghost of the American Puritan. The spirit of self-destruction had entered his bones, and this could not effect a catharsis until he had destroyed one of his chief idols, Abraham Lincoln, the subject he had chosen for an exhaustive biography.

This last gesture of the iconoclast placed Masters beyond the reach of serious criticism. He was fast becoming a literary curiosity; his periodic lapses into barnstorming verse became a fixed habit. He had always been notoriously lax in the practice of self-criticism, so lax indeed that from the very start of his career he published much that should never have appeared in print at all. It was also obvious that he could learn nothing from the critics, who soon discovered that it was better to ignore him entirely, for the problem he presented (beyond the fact that he often wrote badly) was too complex and too closely associated with a movement that was already diverted from the main stream of American literature.

Superficially the most consistent of the three poets who developed under Mencken's patronage was Carl Sandburg. His was a Christian democracy that soon turned the corner and emerged as humanitarian socialism. Naïve as Sandburg may have seemed to his early public, his championship of an inarticulate people was of a harder texture than Lindsay's. His background was of both the Middle Western farm lands and of the large city (Chicago). When the Socialist Party came into being it made a place for Sandburg, and through its eyes he found a means of interpreting the brutality, the force, the impact of the metropolis that stood on the shores of Lake Michigan. He came directly out of a tradition left by Walt Whit-

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man, whose first function was to become the mouthpiece of a voiceless people.

As long as the Socialist Party retained its position as the fighting left wing of political reform in America, Sandburg's poetry carried something of its zeal and emotional vitality. But when the Party began to show signs of inner corruption and to move in the general (and vague) direction of American liberalism, Sandburg's poetry followed in its wake. It was then that the rugged and sometimes sharp outlines of Sandburg's writing became blurred. Like Lindsay he began to turn his attention to making books for children, began to fall back upon his ability to use his facile charm.

Sandburg's real defect was of early origin. It may be traced back to his famous attack upon Billy Sunday in the poem, *A Contemporary Bunkshooter*. Despite the obvious merits of the poem—a zeal that equalled if it did not surpass Sunday's own evangelism, a vigorous critical attitude, and an evident honesty—today it is curiously outmoded, as distant let us say as Masefield's *Everlasting Mercy* and *The Widow in the Bye-Street*. The poem's effectiveness is seriously diminished by the fact that we no longer believe in the Christ of the Socialist Party and his particular function as a saviour of the American working classes. At best this was an inadequate religious symbol, and Sandburg's inability to recognize its weakness leaves his "vigorous" poem today empty of meaning, its liveliness strangely spurious.

With the collapse of idealism in the Socialist Party it was only natural that Sandburg's individual idealism should run a course backward to the figure of Abraham Lincoln, and it is in Lincoln that he has created a new idol in his own image. In Sandburg's hands Lincoln becomes what Sandburg would like to be—the naïve, sun-bronzed protector of American democracy, smelling of the earth from which he sprang, his feet firmly planted in that Middle Western soil whose vitality seems inexhaustible.

In other words the fighting quality in Sandburg's verse has measurably declined and the very language that he once used so effectively—the vivid slang of the street—has lost much of its surprise, a dramatic element that gave Sandburg's early work a valid structure. Now that the element of surprise is gone the original framework of the poems drops into formlessness, and the dramatic climax misses fire. Of course Sandburg was always doomed to suffer something of the defeat of an artist working in a perishable medium. We may admire his courage, and others who follow him may learn much from his early experiments in moulding a new language for literary usage, but his fate was inevitable: nine-tenths of what he has to say is wasted upon topical subject matter transitory as the noon edition of an evening newspaper.

III

At the present moment it seems as though both aspects of the Jeffersonian ideal as revealed by H. L. Mencken and his disciples —both democratic idealism and aristocratic libertarianism—are spiritually bankrupt. The very writers who once fed upon the rich grasses of Monticello are dying of starvation. Even Mr. Mencken's aimless preoccupation with Prohibition and the Congressional circus at Washington seems ominously neurotic, for there was a time when his laughter implied a definite course of action. Most certainly his early campaigns against the genteel sterility of our "Mauve Decade" was not a gesture of futility. What is more, his criticism bore instantaneous fruit and was

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not unlike the little orange or peach tree mysteriously brought to being out of an empty flower pot by Chinese miracle men. We must not forget that Mencken was the first American critic to foresee the fertility of Southern literary soil; our Thomas Wolfes and William Faulkners may be offered as proof of Mr. Mencken's ability to see light in a langorous, semi-tropical midnight that twenty years ago was peopled only by the ghosts of Opie Reid, Lafcadio Hearn (exiled to New Orleans), and George Cable. This period in Mr. Mencken's career is now definitely closed; and if he offers any criticism at all it is given in the spirit of hopeless amusement—a kind of shadow bear-baiting of Herbert Hoover and the dignitaries of the Protestant churches.

The original Mencken disciples are now passing beyond middle age, and the new recruits have already earned the brilliant title recently bestowed upon them by James Branch Cabell—they are no more than "Menckenoids". The younger liberals have deserted the Mencken camp; they not only mistrust the validity of democratic idealism in a country where collective action has become a necessity, but they no longer enjoy the endless vista of the decay of the aristocratic libertarianism of Jefferson. It is enough that three once popular poets have sacrificed their talents upon an empty shrine. The time has come for a reassertion of faith, not for a further contemplation of America's failures in the immediate past. Already the younger men are swinging to the extremes of left and right. Their way is still uncertain but we may be sure that they will have little patience with the heritage of the sage of Monticello as thus far interpreted by our writers.

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HERBERT SPENCER AND OSCAR WILDE

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF "MICHAEL FIELD"

Edited by T. Sturge Moore

(Previous extracts from the letters and journals of Edith Cooper and Katherine Bradley, the women who achieved fame as "Michael Field", appeared in the March and April issues of THE BOOKMAN.)

* * *

(*Entry by Edith Cooper.*)

March 3rd, 1890.

WE WENT to meet Herbert Spencer at lunch, invited by our sweet Miss Bakers. He is a character—with a sharp, kindly, positive face. Hazel eyes of extreme intelligence, tarnished hair just over the ears and under-growing whiskers. But of all faces I find it most difficult to present his in words, even to myself. I cannot fix the characteristics of mouth and nose and look—yet they are not subtle. The brow wholly without artistic or imaginative qualities; but he wore a black silk skull-cap which hid what in his portrait is magnificent—his domed, philosophic head. He speaks like a man whose every sentence is connected with a general principle—yet there is humour and interest in his talk. It is delicious to hear him making disarmed fun at May's perfect frankness of most sweet folly in conversation. He laughs till the tears flow. I am certain our friends are reforming him, for there is the possibility of disagreeable things in his features. He is very faddy about the smallnesses of eating and drinking and comfort. It was sad to find the great Altruist so self-concerned. For all his giant powers of thought, Robert Browning far surpassed him in moral dignity. At the end of lunch, he said childishly, "My feet are cold. I must warm them". "We will all turn to the fire and warm our feet," suggested gracious Miss Rosa; but no! —off he went to his own room and, unless reminded, would have left us without salute, in the oblivion his creature need occasioned.

I was shy, for he put on his spectacles to examine a creature so strangely and hopelessly poetic. Sim was mighty audacious. We were talking of picturesque old houses and how beauty endeared a home for us. He said he was devoted to the useful and what tended to life. "We live by admiration, hope and love," rang out Sim's voice. "But if you get a fever and die?" "Then I shall go on admiring, hoping and loving more and more," was the intrepid answer. "You comfort yourself like that," he said, but his glance appreciated the independence of the stranger. He conversed on slang, under which he includes no misuses of words, only invented expressions which are an end in themselves, with no relation to the history of language and no place in logic. He said the general principle underlying landscape gardening is the emphasis of natural diversities. He was full of the death of the late Japanese Ambassador. It seems he helped that worthy to draw up the new Constitution. On the day when it came in force, the Ambassador was assassinated in

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revenge for his having lifted a curtain with his stick in a temple of the old religion—which curtain he had been warned to respect, as none but the emperor could go beyond it.

After Herbert had started to his club, we saw his drawing-room—by permission. It is bare and false in colour: muddy terra cotta walls; muddled carpet with suspicion of blue; fawn curtains looped like the hangings round a hearse, with edges of impure purple and yellow cords; olive green couch trimmed with violet velvet; chairs of various deadened puces and pinks; Japanese screen with yellow birds; a nymph Egeria on the mantel-shelf in front of a pier glass of convolved gilt, also two red glass vases and two Worcester pots with red and purple artificial roses and tart green leaves in them. The same I saw in his bedroom as I passed. His marble bust and a large picture of him are the most interesting objects—also the table given to him by his Japanese Ambassador. On a table in front of the window were a desk and two book-holders. I saw in them Burns's poems, Congreve, a novel by Buchanan, George Eliot's *Life and Letters—Middlemarch*. On each side of the mantel-shelf hang two landscapes, for one of which he gave the highest price he has ever paid for a picture—£20. It has not the least merit, *mon père Spencer*!

We hear he has a habit of frequently stopping his carriage to feel his pulse; also he raves at the sight of curly parsley about his dishes. When he is wondering what the millions of the suns in the universe can mean, with a religious thrill in his voice, he says in the same breath and tone, "There is fluff coming out of that cushion". Once he was expounding his nebular theory to Miss Rosa, who is rather deaf. She replied about his abstruse subject, while he was saying, "I don't think those sausages were sufficiently done this morning—I will have fish to-morrow".

(*Entry by Katherine Bradley.*)

Yesterday, Monday July 21st, we were suddenly summoned to Mrs. Chandler Moulton's last "at home" in Weymouth Street. The first moments were misery and humiliation. Mrs. Moulton introduced us as a poet, as "Michael Field", and we stood, our wings vibrating in revolt; fashionable women lisped their enchantment at meeting with us. A moment came when this could be borne no longer; I laid a master-hand on the hostess, and told her to introduce us by our Christian names. After that, George Moore was brought to us. He had heard our names across the room; but he is a brother—one of the guild of letters. His admiration for *William Rufus* is unbounded. . . . "By Jove, it's fine. . . . *Ma foi,* it's good. That old fellow with one eye and the passion of the hunting. The scenes in the forest—I have only read the play five or six years ago—the moment it came out—and once—I never read a book twice—yet I see it before me now." He has even proposed it to the *Théâtre Libre* as one of the English plays to be acted. *Long Ago* has disappointed him. We were engaged on an impossible task. It had not the versification of Keats, still there were some fine things in it.

Edith continued the conversation, for I, from far, recognized Oscar Wilde, and desiring to make his better acquaintance, found him by my side, talking easily.

He has a brown skin of coarse texture, insensitive surface and no volcanic blood fructifying it from within—powerful features, a firm jaw and fine head—with hair that one feels was much more beautiful some years ago. It is pathetic when bright hair simply grows dull, instead of turning grey. The whole face wears an aspect of stubborn sense, and the aesthete is discovered simply by the look of well-being in the body (soul take thine

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ease!), the soft comfort of the mouth and a lurking, kindly laziness in the eye. But the dominant trait of that face is the humour—humour that ridicules and gently restrains the wilfulness, the hobby-horse passion, the tendency to individualism, of the rest of the man. There is an Oscar Wilde smiling ironically at his namesake, the aesthete with almost Socratic doubt.

"There is only one man in this century who can write prose." "You mean Mr. Pater." "Yes—take *Marius the Epicurean*—any page." We spoke of the difficulties of writing prose—no good tradition—he had almost quarrelled with (Theodore?) Watts because he wanted to write the language of the Gods (poetry) and Watts sought to win him to prose. . . .

"French is wonderfully rich in colour-words." We agreed English was poor in such—I instanced bluish-grey as a miserable effort, and he dwelt on the full pleasantness and charm of the French colour-words ending in *âtre,—bleuâtre*, etc. But we should grapple with this colour difficulty. It should be our faith that everything in this world could be expressed in words. I spoke of *L'Embarquement pour Cythère*[1]—of the impossibility of expressing what was happening on that fairy water. . . . By the by, he told me a whole story of the Infanta of Velasquez in the Louvre, with a pink rose in her hand. He was bent on learning the history of that rose, and found it in a portrait near at hand, of a dwarf. Now the princess—let history go off with her rags—had given the dwarf that rose—the dwarf was dancing before the court, and she took it from her hair and flung it to him. He went away in rapture at the consciousness of her love . . . then the doctrine of doubles, and inattention on my part—ultimately the dwarf discovers from a mirror his own hideousness and when they come in and try to rouse him to dance, lies stretched responseless. He is dead—dead, they tell the princess, of a broken heart. She replies, going away, "Let those who love me have no hearts". "Fiction—not truth—I could never have any dealings with truth—if truth were to come unto me, to my room, he would say to me, 'You are too wilful'. And I should say to him, 'You are too obvious'. And I should throw him out of the window." Michael: "You would say to *him*. Is not truth a woman?" "Then I could not throw her out of the window; I should bow her to the door."

We agreed—the whole problem of life turns on pleasure—Pater shows that the hedonist—the perfected hedonist is the saint. "One is not always happy when one is good; but one is always good when one is happy." He is writing two articles at present in the *Nineteenth Century* on the *Art of Doing Nothing*. He is at his best when he is lying on a sofa thinking. He does not want to do anything; overcome by the *maladie du style*—the effort to bring in delicate cadences to express exactly what he wants to express—he is prostrate. But to think, to contemplate. . . . Henceforth he is determined to write in language that will only be understood by minds artistically trained. The writing shall not be obscure—quite clear, but its meaning will be seized only by artists. He once wrote a story of Spain—a story in black and silver—in which he endeavoured to give something of the dignity and gloom of Spanish life—like heavy black velvet cushions—and this story, when translated into French, came out pink and blue. It taught him that after all there were certain colour-forces in English—a power of rendering gloom, not in French.

He has a theory it is often genius that spoils

[1] Watteau's masterpiece in the Louvre: see *Sight and Song*, Poems on Pictures by Michael Field, 1892.

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a work of art—a work of art that should be intensely self-conscious. He classed the Brontës, Jane Austen, George Sand under the head genius. This was when I said to him that there was one sentence of Mr. Pater's which I would not say "I could never forgive", because I recognize its justice; but from which I suffered, and which was hard to bear—that in which he speaks of the scholarly conscience as male—adding I did not remember where the passage occurred. "Yes," he said, "it is in *Appreciations*, in the essay on *Style*, page 7—left hand side—at the bottom", and in all this memory the one tiny error was that the page is page 8. Genius, he continued, killed the Brontës. Consider the difference between *Jane Eyre* and *Esmond*. Owing to their imperfect education, the only works we have had from women were works of genius.

"What's that pretty book you have in your hand?" "A book from our hostess"—he opened it—and must have seen the inscription to "Michael Field". Later on he said he would send me his fairy tales—I gave simply the address, Blackberry Lodge, Reigate. . . . I think he understood.[1]

Plato's idea of heaven is simply one of beautiful moments that enter into immortality, of their nature. . . . He, when he gets to heaven, would like to find a number of volumes in vellum that he would be told were his.

What I like about him is the sense of *bien-être*, of comfort, he conveys to the brain. All that a woman does to a man by her presence on the hearth, or by the tea-table, he does to the brain—neither lulling it nor stimulating it—introducing about it a climate of happiness, so that it is twice itself, freed from depression of fragility or chill. . . . We mourned that the English people do not live to art—have indeed no direct contact with it.

His voice, Edith says, is a bony one, and this is true. His body is too well tended and looks like a well-kept garden; his spirit, one would say, was only used to irrigate it. Blustersome torrent passing down its craggy human bed—with him it is conveyed by skilled labour in conduits for the ornamentation of his pleasure ground.

(*Entry by Edith Cooper.*)

June 17th.

We visit Oscar Wilde—being received by Mrs. Wilde in turquoise blue, white frills and amber stockings. The afternoon goes on in a dull fashion till Oscar enters. He wears a lilac shirt and heliotrope tie, a great primrose pink—very Celtic combination, *ma foi!* His large presence beams with the *Heiterkeit* of a Greek God that has descended on a fat man of literary habits.

He sat down and told us that in his belief our *Tragic Mary* and Rossetti's *Poems* were the two beautiful books (in appearance) of the century—but he was going to surpass us, and would send us an early copy of his *Tales*,[2] to make us "very unhappy". He was delicious on the illustrations, that are not taken from anything in the book, only suggested by it—for he holds that literature is more graphic than art, and should therefore never be illustrated in itself, only by what it evokes.

He was full of the success of his *Duchess of Parma* in America, and was beginning to feel that he must make something and go to Paris! He met Forbes (Robertson) with much love, and introduced him to us at once—a man of bony intelligence, with sensitive, thin features, using as little flesh as possible for their expression. A gay, charming time! *Bien-*

[1] This must mean that he had hitherto not known who Miss Bradley was.

[2] *A House of Pomegranates*, designed and decorated by C. Ricketts and C. H. Shannon. 1891.

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être expands from Oscar's irradiated corpulence—from his mossy voice, the way his hands fall and move, and from his courteous eyes, where vivacity springs up round heaviness.

(*Entry by Edith Cooper.*)

At Mr. Benson's. Wed., May 25th, 1892. . . . As we are looking at this Costa, Oscar comes up. He shakes hands with Mrs. Costelloe, and therefore I put out my hand, which he takes (afar off) and never addresses a single word to me after. I have not often seen such rudeness—he is not of the men who can be rude offensively and yet escape. There is no charm in his elephantine body, tightly stuffed into his clothes—with a grass-gorged effect—no charm in his great face and head of unselect Bohemian cast—save the urbanity he can adopt or the intelligence with which he can vitalize his ponderousness. When he shows himself as a *snob* he is disgustingly repulsive. We were not well dressed, as the day had begun with rain—we do not belong to the fashionable world—so Oscar rolls his shoulders toward us. When next I meet him in my choicest French hat, I will turn my back on him, and that decisively. The artist strain in him is crossed with the vulgar respectable—Gods and women cannot endure such a cross. His conduct hurts Mrs. C.; indirectly she conveys her reprehension to us.

March 25th, 1893.

At the *Master Builder.*

(*Entry by Edith.*)

Oscar is in a box, allowing the people to see him and the silver knob of his cane. He is with his wife. My Love (Miss Bradley) remarks he has a "well-nourished head"—yes, and that is not only a criticism of his appearance, but of his work. It is well nourished—its force comes from outside. Flaubert and Maeterlinck have fed *Salome.*

Oscar seems to exhale Paris, and this atmosphere makes one feel easy and gay to look at him. He watches the stage impassively, but with intentness. Our claps help his, and those of a few others, to bring the curtain up at the end of Act IV.

* * *

The Cottage,
Goring-on-Thames.

Dear Michael Field,

In the case of the Independent Theatre you have to rely chiefly on actors who are out of an engagement—those who have engagements being occupied or away—Tell Grein to select only young actors—there are possibilities of poetry and passion in the young—and picturesqueness also, a quality so valuable on the stage—Shun the experienced actor—in poetic drama he is impossible—Choose graceful personalities—young actors and actresses who have charming voices—that is enough—The rest is in the hands of God and the poet—

I look forward to listening to your lovely play recited on a rush-strewn platform, before a tapestry, by graceful things in antique robes, and, if you can manage it, in gilded masks—

So, you see I have nothing to tell you, except that I am your sincere admirer

Oscar Wilde.

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WRITING ON THE THEATRE

by Francis Fergusson

NOWADAYS the publishers turn out a great flood of material on the theatre. It would be impossible for anyone to keep up with it all, and most of it is not worth keeping up with. There are a few interesting theatre documents coming out from time to time, like the Shaw-Ellen Terry correspondence, and there are a very few writers who are important. Gordon Craig, for instance, was the spokesman of a movement, important in its time, which has now spent its force. T. S. Eliot in *The Sacred Wood* and in the dialogue he prefixed to Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, made the one authoritative study of the English dramatic tradition and its present dissolution. These writers in their different ways are landmarks, hilltops rising out of the flood. But the flood continues—from scholars, theatre men, reviewers of plays. What I am trying to do here is make a little survey. The books I have selected seem to me fairly representative of the various kinds and degrees of current writing on the theatre.

Scholars

Professor Allardyce Nicoll, both in his book on *The Theory of the Drama*, and in his later volume, *Masks, Mimes and Miracles* (Harcourt, Brace. $15.00), writes as a scientist whose subject happens to be theatre history instead of, say, the morphology of vertebrates. *Masks*, which is the long story of popular, usually improvised, comedy, from the earliest Greek mimes to the decay of the Commedia dell'Arte near the end of the eighteenth century, has more gusto than the author's earlier volume, yet it would be hard to say whether his pleasure was in popular comedy itself, or in the classifying of its manifold forms. Professor Nicoll's thesis is that this tradition was never quite broken; that it nourished from time to time an Aristophanes or a Molière, and then regressed to a simpler form of entertainment mainly in the hands of its performers. He does not consider modern burlesque, but he implies that it is the Commedia's legitimate heir. His book is the only continuous history in English of the whole line of popular theatre. Moreover, it contains a very useful appendix on the Commedia, with lists of the chief actors, summaries of the important scenarii, with their whereabouts, and descriptions of the stock characters. Because of this and because of the two hundred and twenty-six excellent illustrations, the book is important to any theatre student. Yet I think that even a beginner should read it with scepticism and beware of losing his enthusiasm for the theatre. He should continually remind himself that all this theatre was alive once, and that the judgments of a scientist on the arts are to be discounted.

One must have the same reservations in mind in using Mr. Barrett H. Clark's compilation, *European Theories of the Drama* (Appleton. $5.00). It is a collection of selections from European theatre critics from Aristotle to Archer, inclusive. It would take

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a man of almost unthinkably comprehensive erudition to dispute authoritatively with Mr. Clark about his methods of selection. Nevertheless, even a novice like myself may test the volume in his own way. Suppose, for instance, you hunt up what Mr. Clark has taken from Dante. You find a little excerpt from the *Epistle to Can Grande*, where Dante explains that Comedy is distinguished from Tragedy by having a happy ending. Nothing whatever is included about Dante's ideas on poetry, and he is one of the most dramatic of poets. Nothing about his theory of symbolism, which has always been inseparable from the art of the theatre, and which Dante understood better than anyone else before or since, and explained, briefly, both in the *Epistle* and in the *Convivio*. Mr. Clark's treatment of Dante is perfunctory; yet I believe Dante is still so much alive that he is important for an understanding of Ibsen, for example. Even if you leave out Ibsen's political and historical theories in *Emperor and Galilean*, still his use of symbols, a technical matter well within the province of dramatic theory, was a device which Dante understood a great deal better. There is a kind of patient encyclopedianism which builds an impenetrable wall between the enquirer and the riches of the past.

Mr. W. J. Lawrence, the Shakespearian scholar, is at the opposite pole, in spite of his learning, or perhaps because of its sympathy and its soundness. Although he spends his life in the study of the Elizabethans, he never loses the sense of his own existence in his own time, and therefore of his relation to the past. His style is temperamentally akin to Mr. John Crowe Ransom's; it shows also that he has been feeding on Elizabethan language, and it has, though its periods are shorter, some of the wittiness, thorniness and complexity that prose had in Shakespeare's time. In short, Mr. Lawrence connects us with Shakespeare instead of checking Shakespeare off.

Probably there are very few who know enough about Shakespeare's age and country and the literature of which he was a part, to be able to judge this book, *Shakespeare's Workshop*—(Houghton Mifflin. $3.00) as scholarship. But even the layman can perceive that it is full of the sort of information we need if we are to understand Shakespeare. The first essay, from which the book takes its title, contains the greatest amount of this illuminating information. But even in an essay like *Windows in Shakespeare*, where the point might seem to be just another one of those scholarly minutiae that are usually so boring and so discouraging, he succeeds in throwing light in all directions: on Shakespeare's methods of work, on the towns he lived in, and on certain very beautiful passages in his verse. When he discusses the dates of the *Hamlet* Quartos he sketches in enough background so that the non-specialist can see the point of the research he is making. And so he gives us not only the facts, but the spirit which makes the facts come alive.

Theatre Man

Mr. Thomas Wood Stevens's book has an unprepossessing title: *The Theatre from Athens to Broadway* (Appleton. $2.50). And indeed, he gallops easily from the Corn Dance to Philip Barry somewhat in the manner of our writers of "Outlines". But he is saved from empty superficiality on one side and the pedantic blind alley on the other by having an interest of his own, which automatically limits the scope of his inquiry. He was formerly Director of the Goodman Memorial Theatre in Chicago, and is now Director of the St. Louis Little Theatre, and his

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book is a modest essay on the theatre past by a practical man. His thesis is that there are three moments in the rise and fall of theatrical life: a high point, when great dramatists take charge of the theatre and use it for purposes of drama; a period of interpretation, like the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England, when great actors appear, but no new drama is written; and a fallow period, or period of transition, when the theatre is disorganized, trivial, waiting for a new impulse. We are now in a transitional period, he says, which is a polite way to put it. Perhaps that is why he is rather non-committal about our present theatre artists. But he is impartial, also, when he deals with the past. He has no enthusiasms as Racine and the Elizabethans had; and this is one sign of our contemporary bewilderment, not a failing special to Mr. Stevens. He knows that anthropology, archaeology, history, memoirs, music, and painting all help us to understand the theatre. At no time has so much information for reconstructing the theatre's past been available, and Mr. Stevens knows where to find it. He knows how to utilize it also, as a *régisseur* does, to get ideas for *mis-en-scène*, costume, gesture, style. Neither he nor anybody else succeeds very well in making the past fertilize the contemporary theatre, but he is one of those who manage to animate a few corners of our great theatrical museum.

The most considerable contemporary effort to bring the past to bear on the theatre's present, was made just after the war. Reinhardt, Diaghilev, the Chauve Souris, were flourishing. Cocteau was experimenting with modernizing the Greeks; the Russian and Swedish Ballets collaborated with the best continental painters and musicians, and there was a brief spurt of theatre life in a modern style as learned and allusive as modern poetry. Mr. Theodore Komisarjevsky saw and to some extent participated in this activity, and his book (*The Costume of the Theatre;* Holt. $5.00) shows the results of the experience. It is a simple account of the history of costume, embellished with a suggestive series of photographs of paintings, sculptures, designs and so forth. He writes an especially clear account of twentieth-century costuming for the stage, which should help the uninitiated to find their way about in "modernism". But his tone is elegiac, and one gets unmistakably the impression that he is performing an autopsy. That international and pan-temporal theatre never had much of a public, it was by its nature rootless, and now it has no place it can call its own. Most of its survivors are trying to keep alive in the Talkie Palaces, with their Tudor Men's Rooms and their Louis XV Ladies' Rooms and their million-dollar organs mooing in vast tones about Mah Bebbie and Hot Mommer. But things move quickly these days; even Roxy's is closing, and the Talkies are tearfully taking a tuck in their belts.

Ballyhoo

Mr. Roy Mitchell, sure enough, has been a director of little theatres like Mr. Stevens, but his *Creative Theatre* (John Day. $4.00) is so loud and visionary that I place him among the press-agents and newspaper reviewers. "This is a book for those who can believe in a new kind of theatre arising out of the present one", he booms at the beginning, and then proceeds to lament the tyranny of commerce, literature, and the movies—a strange assortment of bugbears, but characteristic of the Gordon Craig school, who call upon the theatre to emancipate herself from everything, including intelligibility. As one has learned to expect, he regards the director as

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A SELECTED SHELF

A SCIENTIST AMONG THE SOVIETS
by Julian Huxley (HARPERS. $1.50)

IN AN age which has only recently begun to doubt the universal validity of the opinions of scientists, this slight book of Professor Huxley's is bound to receive more attention than it deserves. The author, who is an eminent British zoölogist, has done some excellent work in making certain natural phenomena clear and interesting to the lay reader. More recently—and more pertinent to the subject of the current volume—he has been a collaborator of Mr. H. G. Wells. In *A Scientist Among the Soviets* he has gathered together his random impressions of a short trip to Russia undertaken in company with a party of British scientific and medical men in the summer of 1931, and has drawn some conclusions therefrom.

Professor Huxley believes that Russia contains the embryo of a "new kind of society". His premise is the usual one—that Soviet civilization differs from all others on two principal grounds: "it is organized as much as possible on a collective . . . as against an individualist basis; and its economy is planned throughout". Being a scientist, and moreover the kind of scientist who assumes not only that scientific method is as readily applicable to social as it is to biological life, but that it is actually possible for science to "modify the human type", he is particularly gratified by the supreme place given to science in the Communist schemes. Then he proceeds to point out in detail, with due regard for the fact that this "enormous scientific experiment" is only in its beginnings, the observable advantages enjoyed by the Soviets over the inhabitants of capitalist states.

These advantages, unfortunately, are in most cases neither unique to Russia nor demonstrably due to the Communist system. In assuming that they are, Professor Huxley falls into the natural if unscientific error which catches so many observers of the Soviet scene, and can be explained only by the fact that while they are eager to discover the praiseworthy in the Russia of today, they are happily ignorant of the same things in other countries or in the past. Thus when the author praises the "advances" made by the Communists in sport and physical training and in the unashamed exposure of the human body in mixed bathing places, he is ignoring an exactly similar phenomenon which has become a commonplace in the distinctly capitalist (and incidentally Slavic) civilization of Czechoslovakia. When he marvels at the increased agricultural and industrial production made possible by the Five Year Plan, he overlooks the almost equally amazing record made by the German Empire at the turn of the century. And when he excuses the friction between government and farmer by reminding us, with a note of horror in his voice, that serfdom was abolished in Russia only in 1861 (!), he apparently forgets that slavery in the United States was not even nominally done away with until four years later, and had been abolished in his own country's dominions less than thirty years before.

One could continue with a dozen such examples of "scientific" evaluation as Professor Huxley applies it to education, to the use of

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the military in productive enterprise, or to the problem of leisure. In the end one discovers that he has made a fair case for the contention that the average Russian is better off than Professor Huxley assumes he was before the War; but so is the average Czech and the average Greek. Indeed at the end of his book the author admits that the full accomplishment of the things which he desires —namely, a "planned society" in which "the spirit of science is introduced into politics and industry"—is merely "more likely" in a collectivist than in an individualist society. But no one has yet proved that the spirit of science can be successfully introduced into social life at all, or for that matter should be; and certainly Professor Huxley is far from proving it for Soviet Russia.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

A PRIVATE UNIVERSE *by André Maurois* (APPLETON. $2.50)

THIS collection of journals, essays, and articles, representing what has been of interest to Mr. Maurois during the past few years, when he has divided his time among France, England, and America, makes good reading. His universe is not particularly private, except insofar as it is thoughtfully analyzed in the way most people, Mr. Maurois included, regard as characteristically French. His thought ranges over Proust, Aldous Huxley, Adler, Walter Lippmann, John Dewey, and others. He reports conversations with Kipling, Thornton Wilder, and a group of Princeton undergraduates. Under the heading of Relativity he deals in such things as the League of Nations, love, and the universe as it will be in 1992. He advises a young Frenchman about to visit England to enjoy a number of things without giving vent to enthusiasm. In America, however, the young man will do well to talk freely and seriously. He will then "give them something which they lack . . . a liking for order in ideas, the art of constructing, a long and inventive tradition in analysis of the feelings". In return Americans will bring to him "freshness of mind and a direct manner of setting moral or metaphysical problems, as if they were completely new".

Mr. Maurois's reaction to the social life at Princeton, New Jersey, is delightful. "The pioneer in solitude becomes brutalized," he says. "When he starts to live a social life a code and manners have to be imposed upon him. . . . The formality of pioneers is surprising. If you live, as I have done, in an American university town, you will find scores of visiting-cards on your table the day after your arrival. The whole Faculty calls." A pretty serious problem for anyone, these and countless other attentions. But Mr. Maurois with his unfailing analysis is able to smooth over the matter. "But look closer," says he, "and you will see how much they help to build up life in this young society." In short, the book is both lively and instructive, and one hopes more people will see it than the faculty of Princeton University for whom, doubtless, it will be required reading.

ARCHER WINSTEN

PORTRAITS I *by Desmond MacCarthy* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

A WINDOW IN FLEET STREET *by James Milne* (HOLBORN HOUSE. $2.50)

IT MAY be that in putting these two books together I am doing one or the other of them an injustice. They are both the product of literary journalism—though with MacCarthy, to be sure, one stresses the *literary* and with James Milne the *journalism*.

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If Milne is frankly reminiscent, McCarthy starts off wherever he can with such sentences as "I only saw Conrad once"; and neither gentleman is above gossip. Milne's gossip is the more journalistic ("During what proved to be his last visit to London, George Havens Putnam took me with him to lunch at the dignified Athenaeum Club. . . . One of his amusing anecdotes had to do with Mrs. Florence Barclay. . . ."), but MacCarthy's is the more dangerous.

A glance at the table of contents in *Portraits* will make this clear. It is arranged in alphabetical order, which is both convenient for the reader and inconvenient for the author, who must surely blush for such strange groupings as Strindberg, Tetrazzini, and Trollope or Sir William Harcourt, Horace, and Father Ignatius. Nothing but genius—which MacCarthy does not possess—could make such diversity into a book, though a respectable second-rate talent could turn very pleasant little weekly talks out of it. That is why one must call MacCarthy a gossiper. If only he were more apt and if only he were a little malicious at times, he would be something like a *concierge* at a literary hotel. But he merely commits himself to the expected and the kindly. That is why his gossip is mildly "dangerous". Gossip like Miss Rebecca West's, which is sometimes malicious and generally inspired, can shock the comfortable mind with truth; MacCarthy's gossip merely pushes the comfortable mind further back into its sloth.

No review can do justice to thirty-four separate essays. Some things in MacCarthy's work are good—his summing up of Henry James, his short piece on Professor Walter Raleigh. But first impressions are generally right and I shall not forget the effect of turning over the pages of *Portraits*: the inevitable "conversation" with George Moore (is it a comment on Moore that people can seldom write about him except in bad parody?); a dream-dialogue with Bunyan, which contains a deal of intolerable whimsy; a sentence like this from *Tetrazzini*—"What, after all, were Queen Victoria's messages to her people but 'a few simple chords touched upon the piano'? I am sure when Jubilee Day was over, she too longed to burst into song".

Is the critic important who can write "Trollope's style never reflects sensitiveness to beauty; it never thrills and seldom amuses"? This is to generalize with a vengeance; or has MacCarthy not read the story of the Bishop's chaplain in *Barchester Towers*? *Never* is a big word in criticism, though in gossip it is scarcely considered.

Or is the stylist good who can write of Asquith's diction, "The senses have contributed nothing to its vigour, which is intellectual; nor is it at all indebted to random meditations for richness—the laden camels of such dreaming moments have never brought to it their far-fetched consignments of spices and dyes". There is a fatal charm about this, and—as MacCarthy confesses in *Renan*—"Charm in literature is rather like a kiss in life; potent, even wonderful at times, at others a trifle or even a nuisance". I fear that those laden camels belong with the trifles and the nuisances.

Clough offers some further indication of MacCarthy's limitations. Arthur Clough had cut a poor figure in *Eminent Victorians*, so MacCarthy sets out to justify him, with the result that whatever dubious life Strachey had given the poet is inexorably quenched. Comparisons are not in order here, but it *is* dangerous to glean where Strachey has reaped. Indeed, it is only on rare occasions that MacCarthy compels our admiration. When he says of George Moore that "his difficulty has perhaps been to find sufficiently

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strong feelings to remember" he is wobbling across some pretty thin ice; but it takes courage to do that, and one likes him for it. Otherwise his criticism conforms to his own "I slipped into it" which conjures up the vision of somebody gently subsiding into the mud. It is not bad criticism, because it is founded upon good taste, but is somewhat soft and complacent, and is neither fresh nor exciting.

In the end, one might say that MacCarthy has facility, an uncertain charm, a surface erudition, a decent mind; and that one's real criticism of these essays is that they should never have become a book. Occasional pieces such as these *Portraits* have a purely occasional purpose: read in the weekly periodicals their urbanity may please, and their complacency will harm only those who are in any case not worth helping.

At all events Milne seems clearly the more honest performer. *A Window In Fleet Street,* as its illustrations attest, is quite insignificant; but then it has no pretensions to live up to. In the course of his career as a journalist Milne saw or heard about all kinds of eminent people, and his book will satisfy the very minor curiosities. That, I suspect, was its intention. When he says that Queen Victoria "would, probably, have made an even better Elizabeth than Queen Elizabeth if she had lived in the Elizabethan time" even then we have no complaint. In Milne's day you said that kind of thing, or worse, and got away with it, and you were not in the least ashamed of yourself, because you meant it. Generally speaking, *A Window In Fleet Street* chronicles very small beer. There are people, however, who have a taste for that. Who knows? Perhaps Milne's small beer is a healthier sort of drink than MacCarthy's thin marsala.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

THE LIFE AND WORK OF GOETHE
by J. G. Robertson (DUTTON. $3.75)

THE *Goethejahr* in Germany seems, despite an epidemic of elections and the lack of a Sol Bloom, to compare quite favorably in point of publicity and general vehemence with our own Washington Bicentennial. It is impossible to get one's trunk shipped from Berlin to Potsdam without having the railway agent conscientiously paste silhouettes of Goethe, with suitable inscriptions, all over it and even over the hand luggage. It is equally impossible to find even the slightest of villages where the baritone of the *Gesangverein* has not declaimed the Easter Monologue from *Faust* immediately after the *Chor* has sung the *Heidenröslein* (with variations). And in the matter of memorial calendars, it must be admitted that the German independent publishers have far excelled the violently colourful productions which Mr. Bloom has cautiously marked "Issued by the U. S. Government—Do Not Destroy". Apropos of the coincidence of the Washington and Goethe celebrations, one wonders what the sage of Weimar, who so admired America's freedom from romantic tradition and once wrote to the effect "Amerika, Du hast es besser, Du hast keine Ruinen und alte Schlösser!", would say to our present-day adulation of the great past.

In the face of all this celebration, surely much of it banal and superfluous, one might well ask, why another Goethe biography or critique? And Professor Robertson's new book, careful record and well-considered estimate by an eminent Goethe student that it is, offers no answer to the question. The book pretends to nothing biographically (the author has intended it as a sequel to his *Life of Goethe* published some six years ago), although much of it is taken up with purely

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personal detail. Critically it says nothing new, although everything it does say is in the best tradition of modern English criticism. Yet it can hardly be said that the final chapter achieves entirely its purpose of telling "What, then, does Goethe mean to us today?" Professor Robertson, who is President of the English Goethe Society, seems to forget that there are a great many of "us today", and that by far the larger proportion dwells outside the precincts where is spoken the soft, slightly Victorian-accented language of criticism in which he is so fluent. As a result, his estimation in 1932 seems to have less in common with the world today than have the cogent words of Georg Brandes written more than a distant decade ago.

Writing lives and critical estimates of Goethe and Washington and Beethoven and Leonardo, however, is somehow a pleasant business even to gifted individuals, and it is hard to suppose that it will ever take an end. In the present instance a man like Professor Robertson might better have devoted his talents to the production of a satisfactory, well-prefaced, and annotated translation of one of the principal works of Goethe to relieve a dearth painful to every serious scholar and acknowledged by the author when he says: "There is as yet no uniform or satisfactory edition of even the chief works of Goethe in English translation; the publication of such an edition has long been in the programme of the English Goethe Society". It is to be hoped that the Society will secure the services of its eminent President in that connection.

ALFRED M. FRANKFURTER

MORE LAY THOUGHTS OF A DEAN
by William Ralph Inge (PUTNAM. $2.75)

THREE academic lectures and more than thirty essays (reprinted from newspaper articles published in the last four years) make up this book. The essays show Dean Inge in the rôle of a weekly columnist, writing on all sorts of subjects in the chatty manner of a scholarly talker and sometimes lecturing his readers from a viewpoint that is professedly aloof from current fashions of thought. They show him also as an eclectic in social philosophy, alert and progressive in some respects but a hidebound reactionary in others. He weeps tears of pity for the younger generation born into an age of contraction and perplexity, yet he consoles himself with the flattering thought that they cannot make a worse hash of the world than their elders have done. He is a zealous advocate of birth control without being a eugenist *tout court*. Modern tendencies in penology annoy him, for he holds that our penal laws should cause the offender as much pain as we think he deserves. The *Frauenfrage* of our youth exists for him still and he remains an anti-feminist. He thinks that the girls of twenty-five years ago were much more attractive than women today. Strangely intolerant of everything Catholic, even to the point of stating his opinion that no writer of our time has been so extravagantly overestimated as Francis Thompson, Dean Inge boldly meets the charge of an anti-Catholic bias. "I fear and distrust that arrogant and cruel international corporation which presumes to unchurch all other Christians. Catholics believe that Christ meant to found a universal theocratic empire. I deny it absolutely." That statement certainly lacks nothing in point of sincerity and candour.

His three lectures how him to better advantage, the address on Scientific Ethics being the best. Yet even here he stumbles, as for instance when he solemnly drags the Nordic nonsense into his discussion of American immigration laws. His lecture on English Religious Poetry is a pleasant affair but it lacks

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depth, and his calm acceptance of Browning as a religious poet inevitably recalls Santayana's merciless analysis of the Browning cult. His lecture on Democracy is already known in this country, having been delivered in Baltimore seven years ago.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

HINDOO HOLIDAY *by J. R. Ackerley* (VIKING. $2.50)

THE foreign reporter of exotic scenes may choose between two methods. He may retain his congenital standards and obsessions, using them for the purposes of measure and contrast, or he may strive to identify himself with the life about him. Mr. Ackerley combines both techniques, unhappily. While spending five months in the court of an Indian Maharajah of minor importance, ostensibly tutoring the two-year-old son of the house but actually serving as social companion to the father, he kept a diary of each day's adventures with the names of the principal characters and localities altered. That he gathered amusing material goes without saying, for he set down verbatim many conversations with the Maharajah, the Prime Minister, the Secretary Sahib, the Mohammedan tutor, the Hindoo guest clerk, and sundry Anglo-Indians. For these last he expresses great contempt yet is chiefly distinguished from them by his ignorance of Indian history, economics, and customs—an ignorance that is revealed rather than hidden by his sentimental excursions into the lives of a few natives and by his laborious sophistication.

One cannot blame Mr. Ackerley for lacking knowledge to which he never lays claim and one can only applaud his diligence as a reporter. But he does expose himself to rebuke for attempting to wield the rapier of irony with a hand better suited to the pick-and-shovel squad. If a visiting Englishman is to interpret India through the medium of any creative art he must possess such exceptional powers that he can transcend the limitations of his citizenship. His genius will be measured by the extent to which he is endowed with the gifts of imagination, sympathy, and humility, just as the genius of the colonial administrator—British style—will be measured by the extent to which he lacks those gifts. Displaying the very qualities that are fatal to the artist but essential to the bureaucrat, Mr. Ackerley is at the same time far too clever a young man to let his facts speak for themselves. *Hindoo Holiday* therefore differs from the first volume of the Simon Report not only in its emphasis on the frivolous aspects of Indian life; it is also a less convincing job artistically. Whereas Sir John Simon and his colleagues confined themselves to the immediate task of presenting information, Mr. Ackerley, less conscious of his limitations, attempted something more. If he continues to indulge his fondness for fine writing rather than exercise his talent for reporting, the Indian Civil Service will have lost more than literature stands to gain.

QUINCY HOWE

I WOULD LIVE IT AGAIN *by Julia B. Foraker* (HARPERS. $3.50)

JULIA FORAKER was fifty-nine years old when Roosevelt banished her husband from political life. A great adventure came to a tragic end, but such is her boundless vitality that at eighty-four she has lived the whole adventure again. Only a woman could have seen much that she describes, and she is perhaps the last who can write from vivid experience about the years of America's political, social, and diplomatic coming of age.

Joseph Benson Foraker was twice Governor

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of Ohio, then United States Senator from 1897 to 1908. Julia Bundy married him in the great Grant year, 1868, when the second Republican Party was fourteen years old. Her father was a Congressman from Whig days, one of the Lincoln Electors in 'sixty-four. Important in the advance of the Forakers, quite obviously, were her clear canny intuitions of men and situations, her simplicity, her realistic outlook and her charm.

The 1889 centennial celebration of Washington's first Inaugural, looms large in her memory because of her sense of the spectacular and ridiculous and the thrill of participating in the movements of a crowd concentrated on a single purpose: manoeuvres in New York harbour; the exclamation of General Gordon's loyal Confederate soldier, "I thank God I am an American!"; the ball, not of 400, but of 8,000; the parade; the long wait, with lunch hampers and rugs; the surging, tired crowds; taciturn President Harrison, gaily romantic for once; governors effectively massed and supported by militias and bands; West Point Cadets, Annapolis lads, Governor Foraker riding superbly; the elaborate banquet at the Metropolitan Opera House, and in the street young Roosevelt pointing out the Big Dipper.

The story ends with the cataclysmic Brownsville Affair which brought her husband's career to a sudden end. It is a long, earnest account, "rather terrible", as the author says of another's fall from power, "in the flash it gives of bitterness of soul". This affair of twenty-five years ago is more tragic when it is recalled that only through acquaintance with occasional minutely documented biographies of the Rough Rider President is the Brownsville Affair likely to be even recognizable to a younger generation. Mrs. Foraker's gallant fight at eighty-four to see her husband justified at last is entirely convincing. Yet Foraker was banished for his attempt to bring to a Negro regiment the justice that would prove Roosevelt less than Caesar. "A god could not have won", she concludes, "and Roosevelt's and Foraker's characters being what they were—fearless, independent, and unyielding—were it all to be lived over again it is likely that everything would happen as it did." Gallantly, however, she chose her title: *I Would Live It Again: Memories of a Vivid Life.*

CATHERINE ROYER

THE YOKE OF THUNDER *by Robert P. Tristram Coffin* (MACMILLAN. $1.50)

MR. COFFIN'S fourth book of poems begins by stating quite clearly the spiritual dilemma of which scattered hints have been appearing in his work for some time.

> But I have lived too late. My too sharp eyes
> Compartmented and splintered as the flies',
> Can see the death that swells the veins of roses. . . .
> For me to know the country matters well
> Is to go with Dante into hell. . . .
> But knowing country things, four times of seven
> Is all there still remains to term as heaven.

He does know "the country matters" as deeply as he disdains the city. He has watched them lovingly all his life, it seems, with a sensuous joy in their colours and voices and their touch to hands and feet—"Beauty . . . wearing velvet", "a drop of flame—Taken in a silver net", "all the world runs pearls"—and he sees them accurately, knowing the ways of cows and birds and insects and sea creatures. But behind all the sparkling beauty, the mosaic of diverse lives, is the painful fact of death, and the only unifying idea in his universe is that each being preys upon another. Men and women

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are, no less than gnats, helpless in the web of nature, which twists and strangles them or, sometimes, lets them go on to a pithless old age. On them, too, he allows a greater horror to play: demonic influences which come sometimes straight out of nature and sometimes are an evil residue of human living. From all this evil he shrinks with a morbid tenderness, either rushing toward an uncertain reliance on a guiding Power—uncertain because, no matter how many times he states it, he never carries conviction—or else, turning his back on it, taking refuge in a feverish profusion of images. Not all of Mr. Coffin's verse is tainted thus, of course. There are some innocent and tranquil things like *Go to the Barn with a Lantern* and the simple, sturdy *Where I Took Hold of Life.* These have the heart and soul of the countryside in them, and are not, as much of his work must plead guilty to being, a counsel of despair.

RUTH JANET BARBER

RED SMOKE *by Isaac Don Levine* (MCBRIDE. $2.00)

IT WILL be a serious misfortune if the inflammatory title, the somewhat garish appearance, and the bristling anti-Soviet tone of Mr. Levine's book cause it to be passed over as merely one more propaganda treatise. It is in reality a great deal more than that, for it presents a new answer to a fundamental question that must be lurking somewhere in the mind of everyone, sympathetic or otherwise, who has devoted any consideration to the present and future of the Soviet Union.

In 1915, according to Mr. Levine, the Imperial Russian Government, spurred on by the necessities of the War, began the first comprehensive and official survey of the natural resources of the nation ever to be undertaken. It is this survey, carried on after the Revolution by the Soviets themselves and published in encyclopaedic form as part of the Five Year Plan, that forms the basis of all the vast industrial and agricultural projects of the present Russian Government. What Mr. Levine has done is to take the 1930 edition of this basic Soviet economic document and analyze it carefully, backing his comments with quotations from the source.

The results are startling. The coal resources of all Russia, for instance, are shown to be less than those of the single American state of Wyoming. Water power, according to the estimates of the Soviet investigators, can supply only three percent of the required industrial power. As for metals, the iron production of the United States alone during the last decade was equal to nearly half of all Russia's unmined supplies, and the iron deposits in the famous Magnetic Mountain are shown to be sufficient to supply the tremendous steel works of Magnitogorsk for less than ten years. Russia's total copper resources, if mined at the rate at which copper is mined in North America, would be exhausted in less than fifteen months. Oil, timber, soil productivity, grave disabilities in both natural and artificial channels of transportation—the list is too long to quote here. Mr. Levine covers it completely, and ends with the conclusion of the Soviet scientists themselves: namely, that so far as natural resources and their availability to industry is concerned, Russia is among the poorest countries in the world.

Of all societies in history, that of Soviet Russia is the most unashamedly based upon material values; and each of the many sacrifices demanded of the citizen has had for its justification the promise of industrial wealth to come. The importance of these revelations

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is therefore obvious. If the thus far unquestioningly accepted notion that Russia is one vast reservoir of fuel, of power, of minerals, of all the sinews of modern industry falls to the ground, then the whole Soviet economic structure falls with it, and the alluring promises of the Government must ultimately be proved impossible of fulfilment to an angry people. Mr. Levine draws the two obvious conclusions from his facts. First, that the Soviets, presumably through wilful ignorance, have attempted to turn a state intended by nature for agriculture into an unfeedable industrial colossus. Second, that this attempt will inevitably fail—disastrously for Russia, but with little harm meanwhile to the rest of the world. The acceptance of his facts permits a third conclusion. The natural disadvantages under which Russian industry, in comparison with the industry of other countries, must apparently always work can only be compensated by extraordinary expenditures of labour. This labour must be fed from the farm, with no possibility of a commensurate return to the farmer in the form of manufactured goods; and it will therefore be the cheated agriculturalist, who has already been the chief source of trouble, who will be the leader in the ultimate revolt.

All this is not to say that *Red Smoke* is by any means the perfect book on Russia. Far from it. It is badly proportioned: all that has been discussed above is contained in the first half of the book; the second half contains only the usual scathing condemnation of present conditions, plus an article reprinted from *Scribner's* that is full of unconvincing generalities. The publisher has exercised almost diabolic ingenuity in making the book as a whole inconvenient to use (it has no chapter headings, no table of contents, no index, no maps, no tabular matter). Nevertheless, for anyone who now wishes honestly to reëxamine the premises of his thinking about Russia, this book must be first upon the list.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

THE TINDER BOX OF ASIA *by George E. Sokolsky* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

THE Far-Eastern policy of the American State Department for more than a decade has been based upon the increasing conviction that the real future of American foreign commerce lies not with Europe but with the countries on the western shore of the Pacific Ocean; and it is through no lack of insistence on the part of Secretary Stimson and his predecessors that this conviction is not yet fully shared by American business men and the public at large. Foreign missions have indeed long engendered a sentimental interest in the Heathen Oriental; the revolutions that have decimated China since the War have created occasional flickers of awe at the magnitude of the carnage; but it is only the recent Sino-Japanese conflict, with its unusual international repercussions, that has created an atmosphere in which any considerable number of Americans are likely to be persuaded to take the Far East seriously.

To these latter, Mr. Sokolsky's book will be both useful and refreshing. It has none of the teacher-to-pupil, I-am-an-expert-even-if-I-had-to-have-my-documents-all-translated-at-Harvard tone of many recent books on the Far East, written to impart recently acquired knowledge in very recently digested form. Mr. Sokolsky does not pretend to be an expert; he is merely an unusually cultivated journalist with a strong sense of realities and logic, who has lived in the countries and known the figures he is describing for fifteen years. For reasons which will be stated, his

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book is not the ideal document to make Americans realistically Far-East-conscious; but it is a long step in the right direction.

One may ultimately quarrel with Mr. Sokolsky's basic assumption—that the penetration of Asia by industrial civilization is as inevitable as the tides, and that "progress" will be achieved thereby—but beyond this the author rides no hobbies. One-half of *The Tinder Box of Asia* is devoted to the past history of China and her relations with other countries; here Mr. Sokolsky makes clear the distinction between a nation and a unity of culture, explains the preëminent interest of Russia, Japan, and the United States in the future of China, and emphasizes the ultimate necessity of complete Sino-Japanese coöperation. One-fourth of the book is devoted to a detailed account of the recent fighting in Manchuria and at Shanghai. The final fourth is given over to an analysis of the present state of affairs and to modest suggestions as to what the future may bring.

This latter section, naturally, contains the freshest material in the book. There is an excellent discussion of Communism in China, in which the author, who considers the essential Chinese political struggle to be that between Communism and Nationalism, concludes that unless the Communists can be defeated China is in for another decade of civil war. And there is a penetrating analysis of the League of Nations in the light of its recent Far-Eastern activities, in which Mr. Sokolsky points out the fundamental confusion of moral principles which these activities disclosed. Here he incidentally makes mince-meat of the "new" American doctrine of non-recognition given so important a place in President Hoover's Acceptance Speech.

The weakness of the *The Tinder Box of Asia* is that it is neither a good text book nor a wholly effective popular treatise. Considered as the former, it devotes far too much space (nearly half the book) to the events of the past six months. Considered as the latter, its treatment of past history is too detailed to maintain consistent interest. The chapters are well broken up with explicit sub-headings, however, so that each reader will skip those portions which interest him least; and there is enough in the book that is certain to appeal to any interested American amply to justify Mr. Sokolsky's effort.

ALASTAIR MCKAY

RECOVERY: THE SECOND EFFORT *by Sir Arthur Salter* (CENTURY. $3.00)

IN THE few months since this book was first published, so many events directly related to its substance have transpired that not only the author's command of his subject but also the book's chances of permanent usefulness have been submitted to a vigorous test. It would be a sufficiently handsome compliment to acknowledge that both author and book have passed this test with flying colours; yet one may justly say even more. Not only do many of the things that have "happened" follow in detail from the premise and logic of Sir Arthur's theories, but also those measures which may at this writing be designated as seemingly curative correspond with astonishing fidelity to the author's prescriptions. As a result, one is left with the choice of deciding whether to put this correspondence down to pure coincidence or—as also cannot fail to occur to the reader—to the enormous influence which the book itself has wielded in international, political, and economic circles since its publication.

When one considers, moreover, that the world crisis which Sir Arthur recognized and analyzed so clearly when he wrote *Recovery*

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was aggravated shortly after the appearance of the book by another and nearly fatal shock in the shape of the Kreuger débâcle, the record of constructive work which has since been accomplished in line with the author's theories becomes the more impressive. *Recovery* went to press, and was probably in great part written, toward the end of the horrible winter of 1931-32. As we look back upon the brief interval which separates us from those days, we find a record of accomplishment which is as striking in its contrast to the barren efforts of the previous six or eight months as it is in its corroboration of Sir Arthur's propositions. Lausanne has come and gone, settling at least the first of the related questions of reparations and war debts, the complete official disposal of which Sir Arthur feels to be necessary in spite of the fact that they are in reality already a dead issue. The second question—war debts—now seems not so impossible of discussion as it was when the author of *Recovery* wrote of it; even radical American statesmen, long opposed to mere mention of the subject, have since declared for "revision" and all that that may lead to. And it may be through this very channel of war debts—and bargaining for their revision—that the United States will be able to achieve world disarmament, which Sir Arthur deems the indispensable foundation of world peace and economic security and which he rightly suggests may be enforced in just this way.

To glance at what has been accomplished in this country, we find that our Government has now adopted a policy of sane inflation and of control of commodity prices precisely like the one which Sir Arthur suggested at a time when our will to the contrary seemed unbending. And one political party—with at least a fair chance for success in the November election—has definitely pledged itself to the repeal of the Tariff Act which Sir Arthur saw six months ago as one of the greatest barriers to the return of prosperity to the world in general and particularly to creditor nations like ourselves.

The reader leaves the book with a strong feeling of gratitude to the author for expressing so compactly a situation which many had long despaired of comprehending as a whole. *Recovery* is a masterpiece of objectivity in style and thinking, and it is with regret that one feels it necessary to remonstrate with Sir Arthur for his single failing, a seemingly blind and cherished faith in his beloved League—the only figurant, as a matter of fact, which has failed him in bearing out his theories, for it hardly did the things at Shanghai which he expected of it as he wrote.

ALFRED M. FRANKFURTER

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FOUR NOVELS OF THE MONTH

To William Dursley, of Buntingham, England, forty, bored and a bachelor, there enters out of the storm a prodigal uncle. This is the opening scene of J. B. Priestley's *Faraway* (Harpers. $2.75). It takes no master mind to guess what happens thereafter. Uncle Baldwin has been misconducting himself for the better part of a century on the other side of the world from Buntingham, but at least he has found something better to do with himself than play endless games of chess on Tuesdays, which has been the height of his stay-at-home nephew's diversion. But William gives the old man asylum until an alcoholically induced death overtakes him, and as reward becomes co-heir, with two strangers, of Uncle Baldwin's own private island, Faraway.

The rest of the book is given over to the adventures of the three strangely assorted heirs of Uncle Baldwin, and a bluff, robust character from Lancashire (dragged in, one rather suspects, out of respect to the convention that adventure stories must have a triumvirate of heroes; and, since one of Uncle Baldwin's heirs turns out to be a lady, she is obviously disqualified). William goes off across the North American continent in search of P. T. Riley—the Spanish-Irish-Jewish American lady-heir who provides glamour—and the other two sail by way of the Mediterranean, to foregather again in Tahiti.

The faraway island is rich in pitchblende, from which radium can be extracted, so there is gold at the end of William's rainbow. But it is fairy gold, and eludes him. The three adventurers charter a ship from Tahiti, fail at the first attempt to reach Faraway, succeed in the second, and have their triumph snatched away from them by villainy. So William sails back to Tahiti, leaving the best of his companions dead on Easter Island, marries a dull, good creature instead of the beautiful Spanish-Irish-American Jew with whom, for the first time, he had fallen deeply in love, and goes back to Buntingham, England, and to Tuesday chess. In a concluding scene William is called away from his game to speak once more to "Terry" Riley in a rainy garden, and to lose her again; and he returns to the house feeling once more that happiness is on the other side of the world.

Adventure: Model 1932. Four hundred and fifty pages falling into dust and ashes in the reader's hands as the book ends. I closed *Faraway* and put it on the book-shelf with my mind in a turmoil of questions. Mr. Priestley is easily the most popular novelist alive. His public has been eagerly awaiting this successor to *The Good Companions* and *Angel Pavement*. Are his admirers going to like it? William, the hero, is a timid sceptic to whom nothing could remain glamorous on close acquaintance. Consistently as this hero is drawn, the reason why Mr. Priestley should have elected to unroll his pageant before William's eyes remains a mystery, and it is an even deeper mystery that the author, who has been celebrated far and wide for his gusto and vitality, should appear to agree, in all essentials, with William's own conclusions: that beautiful fruit has no taste, beautiful women are faithless, faraway Eden is always Fool's Paradise, on the verge of triumph one will be laid by the heels, and

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that goodness and stupidity, if not synonymous, are at least virtually indistinguishable. This is what Mr. Priestley's fable comes down to, so subtly and persuasively that my own response was sick dismay. Quite half the book, from the moment William sets out for America, is excellent travelogue; but the brilliance and colour and strangeness of New York and San Francisco, of Tahiti and the South Seas, when passed before the eyes of the shy, myopic hero are covered by a dreary grizzle of disillusion. Gissing at his blackest was less dismal than this. Perhaps—and this speculation is offered in all good faith—Mr. Priestley, realizing that the structure of his book was no more than the good old stereotyped adventure story, sought to give it subtlety and distinction by the choice of an incongruous hero, failing to remember that if one turns to stories of strange lands and exploits at all it is precisely in order to leave the Williams of the world behind. If this is not the reason for the jumble of *genres* in *Faraway*—plot by Stevenson, characters out of Dickens and Conrad, spiritual atmosphere courtesy of George Gissing—then this book is fated to remain, to me, one of the most insoluble of literary mysteries.

In *A Good Man's Love* (Harpers. $2.50) E. M. Delafield writes a story without a hero, without a heroine, almost, from one point of view, without a *raison d'être*, and yet it is so quietly tragic and so completely convincing a story of a young girl of the nineties, of her début, her hopeful expectancy of a good marriage, her one rash abandonment of her mother's standards and subsequent disillusionment at the hands of a cad, of her slow despair and wild joy at a last-minute rescue in the guise of a proposal from an aging beau, that if it had come a generation earlier it might have been an *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the cause of women's emancipation.

Yet Miss Delafield is no propagandist. She wrote, obviously, because she chose to tell the story of a very ordinary little débutante with a managing mother, and she very nearly persuades you that it was well worth the expenditure of her really remarkable talents of observation and—if the paradox is not too outrageous—compassionate satire. Monica Ingram's mother prepares her for marriage by stuffing her with precepts about a young lady's conduct. A girl of high spirits, of strong personality and attractiveness would undoubtedly have weathered the good counsel, and might even have had some profit from it, but poor Monica was the last child in the world to need curbing. The result is that she is deadlocked: quivers at every approach, as much from apprehension as from anticipation, cannot tell the difference between a good man and a cad, and misunderstands almost every move in the game she is supposed to play.

Only once before has a modern author been able to make me accept with a real intoxication of relief what in a sober moment is easily seen as tragedy: when the hero of Laurence Stallings's *Plumes* heard that the leg which has tortured him night and day must be amputated, I felt the same heady escape from unbearable pressure that Miss Delafield gives when at last Monica is led out for a walk by Mr. Pelham—that butt of happier débutantes, that endless aspirant to inaccessible hands—and thoroughly and unmistakably undergoes a proposal of marriage. I am not sure that good writing shorn of inspiration can go much further toward genius than in this making of the unacceptable acceptable.

A Good Man's Love is so well done that it will be Miss Delafield's own fault if her

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reviewers try to read more purpose into the story than is actually there. Believers in progress will probably thank God that we have changed all that and that no Monicas languish on the parent stem today—an obvious absurdity, as the creator of Robert in *The Diary of a Provincial Lady* would be the first to acknowledge; an amateur sociologist could do an essay on the false standards that arise in a society which sends so many of its men out to conquer and colonize that its women must train from the cradle for marriage if they are to hope for marriage at all; in short, there are innumerable "lessons" to be extracted from Miss Delafield's *tour de force*, but I doubt that Miss Delafield meant to do more than turn her sharpness and pity for the space of a book to the task of making one insipid girl live and suffer.

As if to show that this grooming of girls for marriage to the end that they are wrecked as human beings is timeless and international comes Miss Ellen Glasgow's new book, *The Sheltered Life* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50). As always, the South is Miss Glasgow's scene, and a belle of the nineties and a girl of today are her twin heroines. Under its quiet manner this novel is one more indictment of our attitude toward sex, for little Jenny Blair Archbald is shown in the opening pages as a child of imagination, courage, and decency. In the end she has foundered in a swamp of inertia, of obsession with the philandering husband of a woman she worships, of appalling clandestine intrigue which leads her to betray everyone she has cause to love. Such a miasma of sex arises from the pages of *The Sheltered Life* as many a piece of open erotica might envy, yet Miss Glasgow leads you into the bog step by step, like one under an evil enchantment.

This is, I should say, frankly a thesis book, and the thesis is one we have all heard *ad nauseam* these last twenty years: that no good comes to a society which allows passion and chivalry to be separated. This has been the theme of more than one of Miss Glasgow's earlier novels; it was the endless and elaborately illustrated theme of Evelyn Scott's recent *A Calendar of Sin*. Without any great effort one could give a score of titles, from the lists of the past two years, of other books on the same subject. Miss Glasgow's small canvas is extraordinarily effective; infinitely more so, to me, than Miss Scott's jumbled panorama of bad examples. Yet the suspicion creeps in, at the very moment of approving Miss Glasgow's entirely believable characters, her carefully worked out story of decay and death, that if the battle these crusaders are fighting so ardently is not already won they may as well lay aside their arms and rest; if, after all this belabouring, passion and chivalry will not strike hands and become allies, then it is because they are supernatural and immortal enemies and we cannot reconcile them.

When *The Wild Orchid* appeared last year it was plain that its hero, Paul Selmer, would, in the sequel, enter the Catholic Church, and numbers of us triumphantly announced the obvious. Now the sequel is here, and again and again in reading Sigrid Undset's *The Burning Bush* (Knopf. $2.50) I have been made to realize that one can no more foresee the growth of a character in a great novel than one can accurately foresee the growth of a character in real life. Paul joins the Church, it is true, but not, as I was not alone in anticipating, when one satisfaction after another has been taken from him in his secular life. It should have been plain that Fru Undset would not treat her hero,

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her readers, nor the church of her allegiance so shabbily as that. Paul becomes a communicant at the book's opening, and from that point on *The Burning Bush* is a record of his growth in grace.

This story of an average man of business, differing from his fellows of every country only by a slightly keener sensitiveness to the world around him, by being a little more aware than most of us of the necessity for firm spiritual ground under his feet, fully deserves to be called great. On the foundation of Paul's childhood and youth in a home saturated with his mother's ideas of "advancement" and free-thinking, his young manhood and first love, his unfortunate marriage—all carefully laid down in the first book—using material so commonplace as to be merely typical, and yet individualizing Paul and his character by her genius, Sigrid Undset goes on to show Paul in his middle years, harassed, beset by the hostile vulgarity of his wife, misunderstood by his nearest friends, and yet never toppling over into the trite figure of martyrdom which would have ruined the novel, or left it a latter-day tract.

Any synopsis would give the impression of melodrama; for Paul is called upon to meet his early love again, to feel his emotion for Lucy reviving, to kill her drunken husband in her defense. Yet there is no melodrama in *The Burning Bush*. Each episode arises so quietly, remains for a moment while its meaning is absorbed into Paul's being, flows so gently into the next moment of apprehension, that the illusion of living Paul's life with him is never broken.

In reporting on *The Wild Orchid* I felt some doubt that this modern novel would, in its completed form, rank with Sigrid Undset's earlier books. It is only fair to say that this history of Paul Selmer, told throughout in the modern idiom, without recourse to the colour or drama of a mediaeval setting, seems to me the best work that Undset has done. Presently, perhaps, we may have both books in one volume, which is the only fair presentation for a novel of quiet action and inviolable unity.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

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FOR THE FICTION READER

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD *by Claire Spencer* (HARRISON SMITH. $2.50)

A ROBUST French chef and a prudish little Englishwoman who abhorred sexual intercourse were the parents of Peter La Croix. Peter's mother loathed him. At the age of ten while ecstatically polishing boots he caught her hate-charged glance; he shrieked with rage and fell to the floor "a little pool of thin bones".

One day some years later when Peter is an artist, he searches his memory to see if he cannot recall one moment when his mother was gracious. Jubilant over his unexpected success, he decides to go and see her. "I am going to see my mother; I am bringing a plant, earth on its roots. She'll be kind!" But that solitary and remembered gracious moment had been a slip-up on mother's part. "Get away from me," she cries. "How dare you try and crawl in because I am ill. I don't want you. I hate you! Take your plant, I am not dead yet. When I am dead come with flowers; they'll wither soon enough." She further tells him that her hatred of him proceeds from his failure to be the sort of son she wanted for a lover.

Peter is torn between the desire to re-enter his mother's womb and to escape from it. He is a genius but recognizes that his hatred of his mother is the force which makes him paint. He bitterly resents that all women wish to entrap him by love and influence his life. "I want only one thing. I want to work. I want to paint my way back to the grave, without being tortured and destroyed on the way." While he does not arrive at the grave untortured, he does manage to give as good as he receives. When his mother dies Peter is at last happy and commits suicide.

The Quick and the Dead is enacted in modern New York, but setting has little to do with this novel. Its characters are psycho-pathological cases from the Freudian laboratory and their author views them exclusively in their pathological manifestations. The retching jagged emotion, the dribbling loathsome sensation, the hysterical impression, the granulation and distortion and decomposition of life are Miss Spencer's material. There is no question of the success of her style: it is sensitive, intense, and original. The only questions are whether the public is interested in being tortured and nauseated and, this premise granted, whether Miss Spencer's rather abstract characters possess the reality to attain that end.

JOHN BRONSON

PIGEON IRISH *by Francis Stuart* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

THERE is a cold intellectual quality beneath the surface emotionalism of this book that marks it as a distinctively Irish creation. The word creation is used deliberately, for Francis Stuart has produced something new, strange, and exciting. The book may be taken simply as the story of a triangle between one man and two women of opposed temperaments, and its strangeness may be explained by the setting of the incidents in future time and the author's use of three pigeons. Whether the pigeons are meant to

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serve as Greek chorus or to make the point that the complexities of the human mind result in action exactly parallel to that originating in animal instinct, is an open question. Whatever the answer, the pigeon incidents serve to heighten the lyric charm of the book as a whole.

But, though *Pigeon Irish* satisfies the elastic demands of the novel form, it seems more exciting from the purely literary standpoint if taken as a modern allegory. Whether Francis Stuart intended it or not, he seems in his two women to have embodied the qualities of warm heart and cold head which make up the elusive Irish character. In his story Frank Allen is torn between the two.

Allen, the central figure and narrator of the events, is married to Brigid, his blessed, precious, freckle-nosed darling. To their happy home comes Joe Arigho, commandant of the Home Defence during a war which the Irish Republic is fighting on foreign soil. With Joe is his sister, Catherine, "flicker of ash and gold and momentary translucent flame". Catherine's cool brain has found a way to pierce the impenetrable barrage of mechanical weapons at the front by using the most primitive unmechanical means, carrier pigeons. Through them she learns that the war is not going well for Ireland. Joe decides to go and turns his authority over to the reluctant Frank, who had fought for the Irish Republic. Catherine at once decides to use Frank for her own end, which is to sacrifice the body of Ireland for the purpose of saving its soul. Ireland to her is a sanctuary against the material super-civilization that now threatens to swamp it. Brigid sees in her something sinister.

"A straightforward materialism", Brigid cries, "is better than this. The wildest lust and obscenity is better than this morbid spiritual perversion."

But Catherine has her way. She causes a minor revolution in Ireland, the death of her brother, and the destruction of Frank's home. So strong is her belief in the efficacy of suffering for Ireland that she manages not so much to convince as to seduce him by a kind of non-sexual romanticism. She makes him believe that all he holds dear in Irish life, "the flowering of the Irish spring out of the cold wet bud, the Mass of Easter in a bare church full of flowers and tawdry statues, Brigid and I walking home stirred to a depth of love beyond the physical . . . the Ireland of peculiar deep friendships, of race courses, of leisurely companionship with a background of danger, of anguish, of the mountains"—that all this will go unless he follows her into a new ark which will survive the flood of materialism as Noah's did the deluge. Frank goes amid the laughter and disgust of those who think Catherine his fanatic mistress.

Stuart's treatment of his theme is poetic and pitched to a note as high, clear, and fine as the flight of his pigeons. But like his pigeons he follows a difficult course, any flagging on which may bring disaster. He comes perilously close to the ground in the chapter which describes the departure of Frank and Catherine for their ark. But Francis Stuart's prose is so exquisite, his characterization so subtle, and his central idea so original that one hesitates to pick flaws in so fine a performance.

NORAH MEADE

THE FAMILY CIRCLE *by André Maurois* (APPLETON. $2.50)

THIS is the longest novel that M. Maurois has written. With it, his publishers feel, having established himself as "one of the greatest modern biographers", he now "takes his

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place in the forefront of contemporary novelists as well". The story is that of Denise Herpain, whose life is poisoned by her discovery in childhood that her mother is unfaithful to her father. As she grows up she has difficulty in her love-relations, and after marriage goes temporarily insane when she is coaxed into an infidelity of her own. But like her mother she is not in love with her husband, and so she drifts into a series of adulteries. The book ends with a double irony: Denise discovering first that she is causing her own daughter the same agony that she herself had felt, and second that her mother (her father having died) has found a firm and beautiful purpose for her life (which Denise has not) through her love for her old lover, whom she since has married. In the last scene Denise consents to accompany on the piano her mother, whom until now she has hated, and as her mother sings a song once filled for her with bitter childhood memories, she recalls making her discovery years before. "But the quiet beat of her heart, the calm, skilful movements of her hands over the keys, told her that the wound was drained of its poison, that the scar was closed. . . . As she followed that voice, now bearing it up, now striving with it in strength and beauty, she felt a bodily pleasure, an acute sense of joy. 'How she can sing!' she thought." The time covered by *The Family Circle* runs from 1900 to 1931. The setting is first that Norman textile center which has served M. Maurois before in *Bernard Quesnay*, but later shifts principally to Paris, suggesting by turns the social, financial, political, and intellectual life of the French capital.

The Family Circle can be read in two ways. As a psychological portrait of a woman, it is, roughly speaking, in the tradition of Flaubert and should continue the sway of M. Maurois over his myriad admirers, for he has lost none of his familiar power to hold the reader. But this very power will suggest another way of reading his novel. For the truth is that its objective value is very slight; the milieu, the characters are sketchy; the scenes are merely indicated. Everything is sacrificed to keep the reader's interest; first and last, that is the author's purpose. And what an artist he is in achieving it! The story is laid against a background of the questions of the day, and sometimes it makes us feel that we are reading the Sunday newspaper. Unemployment, Russia, Proust, Hoover, Romanticism—all these and hundreds more come on the stage for a moment, like the stars in a monster vaudeville benefit. The central attraction is the juggling act of M. Maurois, who can keep so many balls in the air, and thinks only of pleasing his audience. If the plot needs a little money suspense, then he gives it a little money suspense; if the ending should be ironic but pacific, then the ending is ironic but pacific. There is an absolute minimum of inner necessity. The true irony of *The Family Circle* is that it will probably find a good reception with the general public and be neglected by the literati. In reality, however, since it depends so much on trickery, it has little sustenance to offer the general reader; whereas few professional writers can fail to learn greatly from its stupendous knowledge of the public.

GERALD SYKES

MR. GRESHAM AND OLYMPUS *by Norman Lindsay* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.00)

MR. LINDSAY'S second book cannot be taken seriously, but anyone reading for amusement would put it aside under protest. *Mr. Gresham and Olympus* mobilizes the problems of an Australian family, the Greshams, in particular the problems of the father. At

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the age of fifty Walter Gresham is conscious of a vague unrest. A successful architect, he is bored by endless execution of stupid designs for stupid clients. His home demands little of him: Baby, his wife, is almost incredibly young-looking. She collects—proof after proof that she can still attract men. But she never accepts the prizes she wins. Nina, their daughter, is not really a person but a comely bundle of frustrated impulses. She wants to flout authority, she wants to be stage-manager, and, secretly, she wants love. When Drake crosses her path she relaxes to submission and they marry. Wally, the older son, is a young man about town on an allowance from his father. He drinks. The loss of several newspaper jobs and a chance meeting with his father, who unwittingly plays the escort to the girl his son loves, sober him. He writes a biography, gets money for passage to London, and sails as newspaper correspondent. Jerry, the younger son (younger than he should be at nineteen), lives in an alcove adjoining the house, doesn't even eat with his family, and putters about with pen and brush while he is supposed to be at school. A love affair with one of the neighboring bucolics precipitates his request to clear out. He is decidedly adolescent and may grow up to be almost anything. The author, however, wishes us to understand that Jerry will come out all right. Also Nina. Wally ibid.

Walter Gresham is lovable, has a nice sense of proportion, keen humour, and a sympathetic understanding of his children that occasional flashes of irritation save from the too-good-to-be-true. He suffers, if less than the other characters, from a weak will and a tendency to dramatize himself. One wonders how restless Walter would have been—even at fifty—if his wife and children had been more companionable.

The book holds all the material for a tragedy, but the author has chosen to write a comedy. If the psychological palaver had been cut and the cleverness restrained it would have been a really good novel. As it stands the aphoristic lunges clipped to ambiguity foster the suspicion that the author is Walter and that he also is trying to affirm his youth.

CYRILLY ABELS

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH *by Hans Carossa* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $2.00)

DR. CAROSSA'S *A Childhood* and *A Roumanian Diary* have already appeared in translation. The title of the first indicates its subject, and the second deals with his experiences as a German medical officer on the Roumanian front. The present volume falls roughly in time between these two, covering the period of the narrator's schooling in a Bavarian *gymnasium*. He enters a shy little boy and leaves a youth venturing into the worlds of poetry, love, and thought. It is the distinctive merit of Dr. Carossa's work that, working in a *genre* filled with such things, his boy does not enter the school writhing in agonies of shyness, nauseated with homesickness, and leave it alternating between flights into the romantic empyrean and descents into grubby lust. The objection to these experiences in schoolboy literature is not that they are too infrequent in real life but that the telling of them is usually disfigured with such pleadings for sympathy that the reader wonders if the author has outgrown the emotions he describes. Dr. Carossa deals with no "murky hurricane"; the events he relates are of the more ordinary sort. The boy is punished by being shut up in an empty classroom; a new master comes to the school and the pupils rebel

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against his stern discipline; the students hold a carnival; a steamer with a sick child aboard is stranded in the Danube; a fish escapes from a tub of water.

With a less gifted writer these things might be nothing more than nostalgic pages of autobiography, but Dr. Carossa, whose *Weltanschauung* is almost a mystic's, imbues them with a strange significance. In this author's world there seems much chance, yet each event we finally come to see as a part of a larger pattern, and we draw from the tale a radical optimism which proclaims that even the once painful experience must be joyful in retrospect, because it has been a step toward the achievement of completer understanding and the acceptance of things as they are. The portrayal of an exquisite beauty that is not merely a chimera is the mark of Dr. Carossa's great talent, and, if comparison will make clearer the nature of his work, lifts him far above the easier optimism of writers like Mr. Milne and Sir James Barrie. The translation by Agnes Neill Scott reads nicely except for the presence of a few false scriptural overtones.

GEOFFREY STONE

NIGHT FLIGHT *by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry* (CENTURY. $1.75)

IN HIS preface to this book, one is surprised to find André Gide saying "a paradoxical truth . . . of great psychological import; that man's happiness lies not in freedom but in his acceptance of duty". To criticize a book by commenting on the man who writes a preface to it is not usually an honest *modus operandi*, but in the present case it seems pertinent. Gide proclaiming that man's faculties work best when circumscribed by something higher than themselves strikes one as odd; it becomes less odd as one proceeds in M. de Saint-Exupéry's short tale and finds old employés being fired for things beyond their control, pilots being docked because a fog doesn't rise or their planes fall into forests. The something higher than man in this book is the necessity of getting the mails through on time, the inalterable law that big business must be served. Rivière, the director of a South American air-mail company, displays no human feeling though he secretly has some, and he is constantly stern and harsh (he admits to himself that he cannot define justice and injustice) so that the pilots may be imbued with a love of their work and prove the practicability of night flying. This scene is typical of him:

"It's one ten. Are the papers for the Europe mail in order?"

"I—I thought—"

"Your business is to carry out orders, not to think."

Slowly turning away he moved toward an open window, his hands clasped behind his back. A clerk came up to him.

"We have very few replies, sir. We hear that a great many telegraph lines in the interior have been destroyed."

"Right!"

Unmoving, Rivière stared out into the night.

The above scene takes place while Rivière is awaiting the arrival of the Patagonian plane, which has been caught in a storm. The story covers the time of this storm, alternating between the two men in the plane and those at the Buenos Aires flying field. The descriptions of flight are, to one who has never flown, exciting and lovely, and one's breath comes sharper as the author pictures the metal bird flying over mountains, through mists and fierce winds, while leagues away the home office eagerly follows its course. One's breath also came sharper when the scarlet-coated harbinger of the Queen's justice hastened over white and trackless

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wastes, finally to seize his man; but that was long ago.

Vol de Nuit won the Prix Femina for 1931, a decision which was generally applauded. This may perhaps be explained by the fact that the French have been far more tardy than the English peoples in their worship of the man of action and the further fact that, with French logicality, action now becomes for them not only the source of excitement but the basis of a philosophy. The philosophy inevitably seems more congruous with the modern age (if one is burdened with the idea of modernity) if the action itself is peculiarly modern—flying or highly commercialized boxing. The above criticism may seem unduly heavy for the story of a night flight, but M. de Saint-Exupéry, as well as Gide, sees a large significance in his tale. One does not need to agree with this to admit its entertaining qualities and the great bravery of air-mail pilots. The translation is by Stuart Gilbert, the Joycean exegete, and the volume has been selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club for one of its August specials.

GEOFFREY STONE

THE JOURNEY INWARD *by Kurt Heuser* (VIKING. $2.50)

ONE of the functions of criticism is to state what the author of a book has attempted; another is to judge the success of his attempts. What Herr Heuser has attempted in *The Journey Inward* is admirable, and had he won his goal, we should have had a very interesting book. He doubtless conceived his novel as an *Odyssey* of the soul which at the same time would be an actual journey into strange African territory; he had in mind some watchfulness of the Fates who, no matter how long they wait, in time strike down those who exceed human bounds; and he thought of the luxuriant mystery of what is to the European mind the strangest of continents. But the story's weak spine collapses under the pretentious weight it must bear: perhaps influenced by Conrad, Herr Heuser attempts to wring deep meaning out of trivial events, but he displays more effort than accomplishment. Philosophy, more than any other science, has a place in the novel, since fiction is largely a dramatization of philosophical principles—though this need not be done consciously; a person might justifiably find astro-physics dull, but the person finding philosophy dull would be one who regretted he had an intellect. The troublesome thing is that the philosophy, if it is to be openly propounded, must be good *per se*; and Herr Heuser's sententious utterances are flat and trite and youthfully immature: "There are forces in us more effective than the mechanical operation of a ballistic process; for instance, it is undeniable that a man's eye can radiate power; is it not as forcible as a shot?" It certainly isn't.

Jeronimo the surveyor and war veteran goes into the depths of an unmapped African colony. He meets a Portuguese planter whose mulatto wife has tried to run off into the bush with a black. The story moves backward; we learn that Jeronimo loved an actress in Europe and shot a prisoner of war; something is told of the earlier years of the colony, of the cruel governor (the Scorpion) and his assistant who suppressed a rebellion—thousands were left to die in deep dungeons, one gathers from dark hints. The story returns to the present; a beautiful woman comes to the colony, and goes into the jungle, stalking animals but never shooting them; what really brings her there is the cry of her blood, which she does not understand, urging her to avenge her father's

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death; a Bantu becomes the Fates' vehicle for the avenging. Though Jeronimo's is the journey inward, it is not possible to say who is in fact the chief character.

The translation by Willa and Edwin Muir, because of their high reputation in this field, one supposes to be a faithful rendering of the German, and one smiles at the fun-loving British exaggeration of Naomi Mitchison who says on the jacket "Beautifully written, and the translation flows with complete ease".

GEOFFREY STONE

NEW HEAVEN, NEW EARTH *by Phoebe Fenwick Gaye* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.00)

AMERICA is to be the new earth and is, in accordance with tradition, to supply a new heaven for the nine or ten passengers aboard the S.S. *Gaelic*. Except for Marty Sullivan, the main character, the fates of the various other puppets are likely to be of no concern whatever to the reader.

Yet Miss Gaye's novel should have been of some significance. There is enough material. An unmarried girl in her late twenties who leaves her country in search of something—anything—new, and meets the mismated captain on the ship that is to bring her to her new life; the young Dutch inventor who, as a stowaway, rubs elbows and peels potatoes with the other two stowaways in search of American justice; the mother whose reason for going to America is to find the husband who has deserted her—all of these meet on board, and in one way or another their lives cross.

Enough material, surely; too much, perhaps. For, despite the diversity of incident, the lightness of the book is unvaried throughout; the tone in each separate story remains the same; and the sections where the author can use her style to the best advantage concern the American husband and wife whose lives are relatively unimportant.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf's characters, leading completely separate existences, unwittingly touch one another's lives at significant moments. In *New Heaven, New Earth*, this device is artificial; the result is like a patchquilt with vari-colored pieces deliberately stuck together. There is nothing original in Miss Gaye's treatment; but her easy style, her occasional penetration are evidence that, if she went more deeply into the lives of just a few of her characters, instead of concocting a hodge-podge of so many, they might be more than two-dimensional.

VIVIAN O. WEINER

THE HAPPY PRISONER *by Lorna Rea* (HARPERS. $2.00)

CLARE lived in a world of her own, created by her deafness, which had begun when she was thirteen. Inside her blanket of silence, she created wit, beauty, and kindness in the people whose faces she watched at her mother's dinner parties or in any of the countless places where her adoring family sent her for stimulation and amusement. Her life had never touched ugliness to recognize it. Clare was happy until Noël Carstairs fell in love with her. From his look when he discovered her deafness, "the whole, easy agreeable scheme of her life fell to pieces". A stranger's eyes had enlightened her. For the first time she knew herself an object of pity.

Carstairs bludgeoned Clare's family into having her operated upon by a specialist of his acquaintance. The operation was successful. Clare in the joy of her release grafted all the ideal qualities of her thought world on her impetuous and stubborn lover. Her marriage brought the jarring notes of dis-

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illusion which gradually shut out the harmony of sound, so pleasant to her newly awakened ears. After her baby was born, she slipped smilingly back into her sanctuary of deafness.

"You see, Judy," she explained to her sister, "there are lots of things that aren't said to deaf people, and lots of things they needn't know, as well as things they don't hear."

Mrs. Rea's conception is vivid and interesting. The book is delicately pleasing if slightly oversweet.

HELEN EVERITT

NOVEMBER *by Gustave Flaubert* (ROMAN PRESS. $3.00)

THIS excellent translation of one of Flaubert's earliest fictions is worthy of more than casual notice. The translator has caught the elusive charm of the great artist's youthful personality. One finds an exceptional perfection in the rendering of stylistic turns peculiar to the original French. There are beauties of atmosphere, of imagery, of euphony and observation, which might well dishearten the average translator. In the present instance, these beauties have lost little in the perilous exchange of phrase and linguistic tone.

The tale itself is brief and simple. A young man, handicapped with violent yearnings to live completely, is immured in a narrow environment and oppressed by his own shyness. The poetry of the world and of womankind, as viewed by inarticulate youth, is made accessible through phantasy and confession. The romance of sex is here made a *cul-de-sac*; the hero finds abortive felicity in the arms of a prostitute. In the end, suicide seems logical enough. The style redeems the matter; the artist himself gives rank to the sordid vision.

ARMAND BURKE

HOME IS THE SAILOR *by Ruth Blodgett* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

INTO the background of a well known and well loved portion of the Maine coast Ruth Blodgett has woven the thread of her latest novel. Mattamiskeag, situated on the river of the same name, had been an important ship-building town, sending its sons and the products of its ship-yards to the far places of the world. At the time the story opens, however, the only sea-captain left was old Quintus Gray, who piloted the little river steamer, the *Salme G*, on her daily trips up and down the river. Quintus, as his name indicated, was the fifth and youngest of the "Gray boys" (of the A-Gray branch of the family). For his third wife he had taken a young Finnish woman and it is their son, Alan, who is the hero.

Via the *Salme G* Crystal Merriam of Chicago and New York, the district nurse "presented" to the town on Memorial Day in memory of Mattamiskeag's war hero, makes her appearance. Since Alan is a doctor interested in research and full of modern ideas, it is inevitable that he and Crys should be drawn together, and that something more than a mutual interest in cleaning up dirty homes and experimenting on pussy-cats should develop.

Complications are provided in the person of pretty Elaine Grey—granddaughter of the E-Grey branch of the family—but the real heroine of the story is neither Crystal nor Elaine but the latter's mother, Martha Grey.

Miss Blodgett writes well and she knows and loves Maine and its people, but in her eagerness to get it all in she weaves so intricate a pattern that at times the reader can scarcely see the woods for the trees.

I should like to thank her for her recognition of the merit of the sturdy Finns who

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are buying up and bringing to life so many of Maine's abandoned farms. Those who love the sea and ships will find much of interest; those who enjoy "characters" will smile over Quintus and Imogene Lavendar and Madame Grey, while those who love pussy-cats will feel a sneaking sympathy for Elaine. In short, the background is real and full of colour, the plot a slender thread that seems almost unnecessary, the young lovers unconvincing, and Martha, who dies, the one character to live.

MILDRED SEITZ

A NEW YORK TEMPEST *by Manuel Komroff* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.50)

WHAT Mr. Komroff has done well before he does again in this historical novel. With vivid episode and liberal dialogue he snatches from oblivion a colourful murder which occurred in New York in 1836, when the town had only two hundred thousand inhabitants and there was nothing but farms above what is now Fourteenth Street. He is said to have followed the original course of events with fair accuracy. If so, it is easy to see why tabloids were unnecessary in those days: there was enough legitimate excitement in which people took a more personal interest.

One can picture the announcement of this hundred-year-old murder in a present-day headline: "Show-Girl Strangled With Silk Stocking". Then as now, however, the showgirl was not closely connected with the stage. Jane Holden—whose name had been Dorcas Evans until her father, outraged by the scandal when she took her third lover, had driven her from home at the age of eighteen—was a frail female. Mr. James Gordon Bennett, founder of a little gazette, the *New York Herald*, reported in his columns after the murder that she lived in "one of the most splendid establishments devoted to infamous intercourse that the city can show". He also noted her beauty, surpassing "in every respect the Venus de Medici". Her lover and murderer was Oliver Benson, a rising young man whose uncle was rich and who had a good social position, though he was not above turning a dishonest penny during the Great Fire of 1835. It was her misfortune to fall deeply in love with him. It was also her misfortune that later, when he was no longer in love with her, she still remembered the money he had stolen and invested in a small farm near the Kissing Bridge, which was where Fifty-second Street now runs into Second Avenue. He was afraid of what she had no intention of doing, and he took violent means of prevention.

The trial turned into a minor Dreyfus Case with all the city taking sides. Society people, clerks, and the good people were for poor Benson. The fire laddies, the roughs, and the Irish boys were for justice and a speedy hanging. There was also a modern note of juggling for advantage by Eli Welden, the District Attorney, and his predecessor and enemy, Hopkinson of the defense.

Out of these events, of which this book might almost be a centennial observance, Mr. Komroff has drawn a picture of the time and people which is full of drama and local colour. His descriptions of Bridewell prison and its inmates, of the Old Brewery and its masterless crew of villains, and of rat-killings in the pit while men backed their favourite terriers are excellent. He is at his best in the deft characterization of persons from all walks of life. It is this ability more than anything else that gives the distinction of a living, day-before-yesterday quality to Mr. Komroff's work. It follows that this book, once opened, is not easy to close.

ARCHER WINSTEN

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THE BOOKMAN'S GUIDE TO FICTION

MADAM *by Richmond Barrett* (Liveright)
Good character novel of a wild woman with too much money and no sense, as seen through the eyes of her servants.

THE WEATHER TREE *by Maristan Chapman* (Viking)*
Another of the Chapmans's sympathetic and understanding portrayals of Southern mountain folk, built around a city man who "fails of" the people he is trying to "improve".

DANCING LADY *by James Warner Bellah* (Farrar & Rinehart)
A *Saturday-Evening-Post* Cinderella story by an excellent craftsman: how a tenement girl went by way of the stage from rags to riches and part way back.

TWO LIVING AND ONE DEAD *by Sigurd Christiansen* (Liveright)*
Excellent present-day drama of conscience.

BENEFITS RECEIVED *by Alice Grant Rosman* (Minton, Balch)
A simple, agreeable warm-weather novel dominated by one of those grand old ladies in conflict with a group of fawning and jealous relatives.

THE GAP IN THE CURTAIN *by John Buchan* (Houghton Mifflin)*
Weary members of a houseparty are given a chance to read the *Times* of a year in the future. How utterly their knowledge fails to alter their characters or the real course of their lives is the kernel of Mr. Buchan's story, written with real insight and imagination.

THE CITY JUNGLE *by Felix Salten* (Simon & Schuster)
The tragedy of animals captive in a city zoo, marred by the fact that the artist has turned propagandist.

MIDDLE CLASS *by Nanette Kutner* (Long & Smith)
Moderate success in an attempt to show what can happen to a middle-class New York family when five million unexpected dollars are suddenly divided among its members.

MATSU *by John Paris* (Putnam)
A rich Japanese nobleman comes to England in search of a "sensuous education" and is forthwith married by the new-poor Sheila Mannifold. Good while on British soil, weak when the story moves to Japan.

MYSELF AND THE YOUNG BOWMAN *by Cyril Hume* (Doubleday, Doran)*
Five short prose fantasies interspersed with poems, in which dryads and Catholic clergymen meet on an equal footing without embarrassment on either side.

BRIEF RAPTURE *by Polan Banks* (Harrison Smith)
Nice writing in a novel that deals with the problems of a courageous girl who frankly tells her new husband about a brief love affair of the past, only to have him murder the man.

THEY CAME TO THE CASTLE *by Anthony Bertram* (Dutton)*
A mixed group of paying guests visit a penurious Countess in her Tyrolean castle to discuss themselves, their problems, and their neighbours. Light reading that does not overtax the powers of belief until the last page.

THE FRENCH HUSBAND *by Kathleen Coyle* (Dutton)*
An inconsequential but nicely written summer novel about a rich young American girl's effort to win her noble French husband away from his mistress.

HORIZON FEVER *by Robert Dunn* (Boni)*
New horizons, new mountains, new women ever beckon the restless Rupert Starke. A book whose hero is knee-deep in adventure but almost out of touch with life.

THE RAKISH HALO *by Harriet Henry* (Morrow)
An unmarried city girl, normally attractive and with plenty of opportunity to meet men, solves the problem of whether or not to keep her halo, and, if so, at what angle it should be worn.

"—A BRILLIANT FUTURE . . ." *Anonymous* (Vanguard)
A sordid and mediocre story of the confusion, the petty jealousies, and the relentless drive to keep profits up and prices down in a large New York department store.

* All prices $2.00 except when followed by asterisk, in which case price is $2.50.

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YOUNG JONATHAN *by Sophia Cleugh* (Houghton Mifflin)
Soothing reading in a fairy tale about a daisy boy and a Duchess, an English Lord and a simple Serbian girl, a British government official and a Lady.

Farce

HOT WATER *by P. G. Wodehouse* (Doubleday, Doran)
The Chateau Blissac in the south of France is the current P.G.W. madhouse. A senator, a football star, a pickpocket, a safe-blower, assorted beautiful girls and Mrs. Gedge's husband all have designs on Mrs. Gedge's safe. Rea Irvin's illustrations are almost as funny as the text.

THE TENNESSEE POPPY *by Frances Crane* (Farrar & Rinehart)
A little Southern dumbbell sets out to marry into the English aristocracy. The English accent, for once, gets all it deserves. Farce so good it ought to be better.

CHRISTOPHER STRONG *by Gilbert Frankau* (Dutton)*
Mild entertainment centering about a wealthy butter-and-egg man who loses faith in the philosophy of all work and no play. Trite at its worst, very low Galsworthy at its best.

VERY PRIVATE SIN *by Laurence Oliver* (Minton, Balch)
A glib British comedy concerning the Hawkins clan in their efforts to save Stephen, heir to a mushroom peerage, from a mésalliance.

EXCESS BAGGAGE *by H. M. Raleigh* (Dutton)
Unamusing British farce about thoroughly unamusing people, in which the Vicar of Much-Warlock murders his bishop with a sherry-decanter.

Adventure

THE DEPUTY AT SNOW MOUNTAIN *by Edison Marshall* (Kinsey)
Love and adventure in the Alaska of 1930, with the action unfortunately slowed to a walk.

THE BLACK SWAN *by Rafael Sabatini* (Houghton Mifflin)
A dashing and plausible story of pirate days, turning about the dastardly Tom Leach and a really courageous hero and heroine.

THE SAGINAW PAUL BUNYAN *by James Stevens* (Knopf)*
The boss of all boss loggers tames the Saginaw country in company with Babe the Blue Ox, Johnny Inkslinger, and others. A magnificent continuation of Mr. Stevens's Bunyan saga.

AT NINE BELLS *by Samuel Emery* (Dutton)
A tired business man goes on an oil tanker for a long vacation, and falls headlong into adventure as the ship's bell strikes nine.

SMOKY PASS *by Aubrey Boyd* (Dutton)
An upstanding Easterner and a hair-trigger lad from the West join forces in the Alaska gold rush of 1898. A frankly popular adventure story, brimming with action, mystery, and romance.

Mystery & Detective

MURDER AT EXBRIDGE *by Victor L. Whitechurch* (Dodd, Mead)
Within the sacred precincts of St. George's College a murder provides complications for Scotland Yard. Canon Whitechurch is a seasoned mystery writer who uses no snares to trip up his readers.

THE MIDNIGHT MURDER *by Paul Herring* (Lippincott)
Death of an American motion picture actress in London investigated by Detective-Inspector Bow. One up for Scotland Yard and happiness for Lord Marwood.

KEEPER OF THE KEYS *by Earl Derr Biggers* (Bobbs-Merrill)
Charlie Chan solves a double tragedy in the snow-capped mountains of California. The Hawaiian detective improves with each case.

KILLERS' CARNIVAL *by Temple Field* (Farrar & Rinehart)
Twelve murders in two hundred and seventy-four pages. From the slums to Park Avenue a wealthy New Yorker fights a warped killer single-handed in a bloodthirsty drama for seasoned addicts.

THE DRAGON IN HARNESS *by Sinclair Gluck* (Dodd, Mead)
Uncle Sam's Secret Service men in the Orient prevent success of Japanese attack on California. A mystery of international dimensions skilfully treated, with a terrific sea battle as climax.

DEAD HANDS REACHING *by Marion Scott* (Macmillan)
Detective Courtney Brade takes charge of a murder case in Willow Valley. Good characterizations throughout this drama of revenging hands reaching from the grave.

THE SECRET OF THE MORGUE *by Frederick G. Eberhard* (Macaulay)
Two doctors and an up-to-date criminologist prove that murder will out. Building his grisly tale around the defalcations of an absconding bank teller, Dr. Eberhard tells what really happened in Summitville.

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AT A GLANCE

ENGLISHMEN AT REST AND PLAY *edited by Reginald Lennard* (OXFORD. $4.25)

THIS volume, under the general editorship of Reginald Lennard, depicts several loosely-related aspects of English life and manners between 1558 and 1714. The first essay, by Mr. Lennard, surveys the development of the famous watering-places and the evolution of health resorts into pleasure resorts, concluding at a period shortly before the discovery of the seashore as a vacation place. The second essay, by Mr. W. P. Baker, concerns the observance of Sunday and its growth as a controversial issue between the accession of Queen Elizabeth and the death of Queen Anne. The third, by R. F. Bretherton, deals with country inns and ale-houses, and the legal regulation of drinking. The last essay, by R. N. K. Rees and Charles Fenby, describes the changes in meals and mealtimes.

The intention of these studies cannot be over-praised, since history is greatly illuminated by an intimate knowledge of the people with whom it deals. Unlike certain other volumes in the Oxford series on English Life and History, however, this book is rather too compendious to hold the attention of the general reader. As a work of scholarship its merits are undeniable; it will be found useful accordingly.

TOLD AT THE EXPLORERS' CLUB *edited by Frederick A. Blossom* (BONI. $3.50)

THESE thirty-three short narratives of perilous adventure offer variable satisfaction, but satisfaction in plenty. Several of the episodes, such as those recounted by Colonel Lindbergh, Roy Chapman Andrews, W. Almer Ekblow, Lewis R. Freeman, John Lindsay, and George F. Shearwood, are truly exciting and not easily to be forgotten. The scene is the wide world; and the variety of the thrill depends largely upon the imaginative powers of the reader. To be present, in fancy, when Lindbergh steps off his plane into a fog-burdened atmosphere; to traverse an unknown Korean forest with Andrews; to cross thin ice in the Arctic with Ekblow; to pursue the Fire Dog of Asu with Freeman, invade Matto Grasso with Lindsay, and follow Shearwood into combat with Abyssinian warriors—these are authentic breath-taking experiences to be ranked with fictional achievements of the great masters. Carveth Wells alone, writing of the Malay fauna with his ebullient wit and good humour, is enough to justify the price of the book.

THE FUN OF IT *by Amelia Earhart* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $2.50)

ANYONE looking for a dramatic picture of flying the Atlantic will be disappointed in this book, for Mrs. Putnam gives a modest matter-of-fact report of her remarkable feat. But it is an enjoyable story of a girl who flew for the fun of it and accomplished a flight that has tested the skill and nerve of the strongest man.

FROM HERE TO YENDER *by Marion Nicholl Rawson* (DUTTON. $3.75)

THIS is an extremely interesting and detailed book on travel in the United States before and shortly after the beginning of the nineteenth century. Everything connected with the subject is included: roads, conveyances, taverns, bridges, canals, peddlers and their wares, the speech of the time, and even graveyards. The latter may seem remotely connected, but the author explains that almost any journey on one of the old highways would take the traveller past a "God's Acre" where he might read an epitaph such as this one:

> Here lies buried Mr. Joel Roys
> Who Fell in a Fier
> and Burnt to Death—
> O Mortality.

What the people wore, and how cold it was in winter, and what they did to keep warm

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while travelling, these things and much more Mrs. Rawson tells. She knows why covered bridges were covered (to protect the floor from sun and weather) and how far horses used to go in a day—in one instance ninety-five miles from Deerfield to Boston and the horse was none the worse. The stage from New York to Boston used to make New Haven for its first night's stop. On the way it had gone through what is now aristocratic Greenwich, Connecticut, then called Horseneck. That bit of information alone would have made the book worth while did it not also contain much original research by Mrs. Rawson, who is an authority in her chosen field of the early American.

IN GREAT WATERS *by Captain S.G.S. McNeil, R.D., R.N.R. (retd.)* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.00)

CAPTAIN MCNEIL, who was recently retired from the Cunard service at the age of sixty, tells here the story of his half-century upon the sea. Bluntly, sometimes quite technically, and with commendable pride in himself, he relates his proud career, often giving to victorious encounters with truculent subordinates or overbearing superiors as much or more importance than he does to the superb maritime exploits with which his life abounded. Behind the author's rough outlines the reader with imagination and a love of the sea will appreciate this magnificent life which embraced sea-faring from an apprenticeship in sail to the command of the *Mauretania.*

THE SAMARITANS OF MOLOKAI *by Charles J. Dutton* (DODD, MEAD. $3.00)

MR. DUTTON has taken the history of leprosy from its earliest recorded appearance in Egypt nearly 5000 years ago, has traced its virulence in Europe where, during the Middle Ages up to the time of the Black Death, hundreds of thousands were afflicted, and has treated in detail the work of Father Damien and Brother Joseph Dutton at the famous leper colony on the island of Molokai. Since the author is a relative of Ira (Brother Joseph) Dutton, it is natural that he should have been able to collect a large amount of material about Brother Joseph and should devote more than half the book to his life. Now Brother Joseph was a very strange man. When urged to accept the pension due him for his Civil War service, he refused, saying, "My country has always treated me far better than I deserve and does not owe me a cent. . . ." But this book does neither him, nor Father Damien, nor leprosy the justice of an adequate portrayal. One gathers a strong impression that it was written simply because a lot of material fell into the hands of a well-meaning relative.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF HUMAN STUPIDITY *by Walter Pitkin* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $3.50)

AN AMUSING but poorly written study of human foibles. Dr. Pitkin hews to no definite line. His attack is oblique and discursive and replete with behaviouristic theory and example. The book is well printed, well bound, and in both interest and merit stands a full remove or two above the run of current "drug-store" treatises.

ACROSS THE GOBI DESERT *by Sven Hedin* (DUTTON. $5.00)

THIS book is the record of "the biggest scientific expedition that had ever set out for the center of the greatest continent of the earth". Because of the nature of its interests—geology, geography, topography—its findings and its discoveries consist of endless notations of depths, temperatures, areas, et cetera. Only subordinately are the inhabitants, plant and animal, of this *terra incognita* dealt with; and the sterility of the scene is its limitation.

THROUGH THE HAWSE-HOLE *by Florence Bennett Anderson* (MACMILLAN. $3.00)

THE title is misleading, especially as its extension, *The True Story of a Nantucket Whaling Captain,* leads one to expect a rattling tale of the deep. Instead the book is a genealogy—a family picture painted with pride and most charmingly done, with little in it of the sea and much of Nantucket, that odd little island on the outer edge of Buzzards's Bay, its airs softened by the wind from the Gulf Stream and scented tenderly, to quote the text, "with whiffs of bayberry and sassafras, sweet fern, arbutus and violets in their season, dwarf pine and scrub oak, huckleberry

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and beach plum bushes, wild lilies, marshmallows, orchids hidden in aromatic swamps, and various sturdy heath blossoms". The family line traced is that of the Pinkhams, beginning with Jethro, who was born on Guy Fawkes's day, 1745. He who crawled easily and smoothly through the hawse-hole was Seth, great-grandfather of the writer. They were worthy people, the Pinkhams, but it is in depicting their surroundings that the book excels. Nantucketers are a race by themselves, and they cling lovingly to their isle of sand, which one day slipped off from some wandering glacier seeking a lodgement in the waves.

International Affairs

THE SPIRIT OF WORLD POLITICS *by William Ernest Hocking* (MACMILLAN. $5.00)

THIS book by Professor Hocking of the Harvard Philosophy Department gives to us in carefully written and closely reasoned outline the major ethical and political considerations which now underly the domination of the lesser by the greater states. The type of international point of view which Professor Hocking stresses, although universally applicable, is developed in the main from the author's recent studies in the Near East. The Mediterranean mandates, the present burdens of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, and the special problems presented by Islamic culture are treated at length. Professor Hocking throughout the book weighs, considers, and seeks painstakingly for newer and clearer principles of international conduct. In both method and conclusion he has performed an excellent service.

THE CITY OF THE RED PLAGUE *by George Popoff* (DUTTON. $3.50)

RIGA, the old Hanseatic city, partly Russian, partly German, but entirely bourgeois in sympathy, was occupied by the Bolsheviki during the first five months of 1919. This book presents a first-hand account of the invasion, documented by proclamations and excerpts from the official Communist newspaper. The author was at the time a university student, and his status made his own sufferings relatively light: he did not starve, but was only continuously hungry; he escaped conscription to the Red Army, imprisonment, even serious illness; no member of his immediate family was executed; it is probable that being young he was not afraid very much of the time. Nevertheless he well recognized, and makes his readers understand, the mad brutality of the leaders, the stupid waste of life and the means of life, the rise to power of the irresponsible and criminal classes, and that ultimate horror, the loosening in even the most civilized people of bestial greed, rage, revenge.

SEVEN YEARS IN SOVIET RUSSIA *by Paul Scheffer, the authorized translation by Arthur Livingston* (MACMILLAN. $3.00)

MR. SCHEFFER was for seven years the Russian correspondent of one of the leading German newspapers, and what he wrote was frequently quoted in this country. In 1929 he was refused permission to return to Russia after a vacation, his attitude having become too critical to accord with the policy of the Soviet Government. The present book is in the main a selection from his articles, each article being dated but the whole arranged under the general heads of business, art, religion, and daily life, the Soviet economy from the New Economic Policy to the Five-Year Plan, men and principles in the struggle for power, and Russia in Europe and Asia; and the presentation completed by some reflections upon the past and future of Russia set down last year at Washington. Taken as a whole, the articles offer an instructive view of the developing Russian scene, principally on its economic and political sides, with interesting sidelights on such subjects as the anti-religious campaign, the censorship of news, the contemporary Russian theatre, and the youth movement.

THIS NEW RED FREEDOM *by Thelma Nurenberg* (WADSWORTH PRESS. $2.50)

MISS NURENBERG'S book deserves special praise for its intelligent sympathy with present-day Russia and for the stark photographic detail with which its observations are set down. The visit which it recounts was evidently hurried and the itinerary conventional, but the descriptions of places, persons, and the incidents of travel

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are lively, and the reports of conversations with all kinds of people reveal much of the nature of the average Russian mind. Only the first half of the book is narrative, the second being a brief informative account of the Soviet governmental and political organization, the progress of the Five-Year Plan, censorship and the courts, the new status of women and the reaction to it, the treatment of prisoners and the still considerable number of homeless children, the campaign against religion, and student life.

THE GOLD STANDARD AND ITS FUTURE *by T. E. Gregory* (DUTTON. $1.50)

THE layman who wants to understand what the gold standard means, the difficulties that follow its abandonment, and the conditions under which it may be restored can do no better than to read this thoughtful and dispassionate little book. Professor Gregory looks at the matter primarily from the standpoint of Great Britain, and his conclusion that Britain's abandonment of gold payments was not a deliberate act of far-sighted statesmanship intended to meet a condition of falling prices and declining export trade, but merely the result of "an international banking panic" will perhaps be read with chagrin by those who have affected to see the dawn of a new economic era when Great Britain "went off gold". There is further enforcement of the uncomfortable truth that a country that stays off gold must expect to find the continued depreciation of its currency abroad operating to raise costs of production at home. Professor Gregory looks for the restoration of the gold standard in Great Britain, although he apparently thinks it may be wise to stabilize the pound sterling at a somewhat lower rate of exchange than formerly.

Literary

GEORGE MOORE *by Humbert Wolfe* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. $1.50)

A SHORT study of Moore by one who stands indubitably first among all his admirers. The book is disjointed and despite its obvious sincerity seems in the end to be little more than a musing and rambling effort in the vague direction of a more intimate understanding of its subject. Mr. Wolfe abjures careful analysis of Moore's work on the theory that "contemporary criticism is merely an exhibition of fugitive prejudice". This does not restrain him, however, from occasional pronouncements. *The Brook Kerith,* he believes, is "the greatest single literary achievement of our time, and possibly the greatest prose book, except the Bible, in the English tongue".

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY *by Mona Wilson* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. $3.75)

FOR readers interested in sixteenth century literature irrespective of *genre,* for those interested in literary biography, and for all collectors of Sidneiana this should prove more than a valuable book. Although Miss Wilson's volume in no sense supersedes the definitive work on Sidney by Professor Wallace it should serve as an excellent supplement to the latter in that far more attention is here paid to Sidney's writings. The text, running to 286 pages, is followed by a forty-four-page appendix with extensive chapter bibliographies. There are twenty important plates.

POEMS OF FRANCIS THOMPSON *edited by Rev. Terence L. Connolly, S. J.* (CENTURY. $3.00)

A COMPLETE, compact edition, containing copious notes, bibliographical, biographical, and exegetical, with special reference to Thompson's Catholicity, which, Father Connolly holds, pervaded all his life and work. It will be valuable to the general reader as well as to the student, for, though *The Hound of Heaven* needs no gloss, most of the poems gain in richness of humanity by a knowledge of the circumstances in which they were written. There is a Foreword by George N. Shuster, and the book bears the *Nihil Obstat.*

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF JOHN SKELTON *edited by Philip Henderson* (DUTTON. $3.50)

JOHN SKELTON (1460?–1529) was laureate under Henry VIII—to whom he had been tutor—and a member of the priesthood. His name is perhaps chiefly known to those who have not read him

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by his reputation for obscenity, largely saddled on him by the men of the Age of Reason—and rather inexplicably, for they minced words scarcely less than the Tudor laureate. Skelton came in a sterile period so far as literature went: a few poems, chiefly anonymous, stand out with a sweet loveliness (*e.g., Quia Amore Langueo*), but the bulk of the age's verse are dull followings of Lydgate, and from the midst of it Skelton sounds forth with great vigour and not infrequently a note of beauty. Many of his poems are little more than amazing exercises in rhyme and rhythm, but others are fine satire, and still others show a true poetic sensibility.

COLLECTED ESSAYS OF ROBERT BRIDGES: VIII, IX, X (OXFORD. $1.00)

THE essays on *Dante in English Literature, The Poems of Emily Brontë,* and *Dryden on Milton* in this pamphlet complete the first volume of Bridges's collected papers, printed in the phonetic alphabet which the poet was designing at the time of his death. The presswork has been supervised by Mrs. Bridges, who is also the creator of the one symbol—a very happy one—which her husband had not made. The text is surprisingly easy to read, and the pages, though the type is intricate in line, are pleasant to the eye. If the publishers and the Society for Pure English decide to go on with it, it would seem that excellent use can be made of this type in the printing of poetry and of very fine prose, since its effect is to divert a part of the reader's attention from the substance to the sound of what he reads. In following conventional type, one listens by some effort of imagination, and sometimes entirely forgets to hear.

A RABBIT IN THE AIR *by David Garnett* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $1.50)

MR. GARNETT'S keen senses and his grace and precision of language are effectively turned to account in this journal of his experiences while learning to fly. The sharp flavour of the English countryside is deftly caught, and the book itself is less a guide for the aspiring pilot than a delightful essay on a set of twentieth-century sensations which have heretofore been almost totally neglected in literature. Printed in England and inexpensively bound in this country.

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TYPOGRAPHY, ART, AND DESIGN

Mr. Kent Among the Classics

Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. Published and printed by the Printing House of Leo Hart ($15.00). *Beowulf*. Translated by William Ellery Leonard. Printed by the Pynson Printers for Random House ($25.00).

Rockwell Kent has been called the typographer's perfect illustrator. Most of his work certainly invites combination with type, and none resists it, as do the drawings of many a better artist. His earlier and best known manner (which owes much to his interest in the wood-cut and was occasionally executed in that medium), has a crispness of line that combines beautifully with type.

His love for the sea and the North produced, in *Voyaging* and *Wilderness*, two of his most successful books, though even those show signs of that sentimental mysticism which grew more acute as time went on. *Moby Dick*, done in the same manner, is probably his most satisfactory job—perhaps because whales have no souls—and the drawings have more punch than most of his recent work.

In the famous unreadable Random House *Candide*, the subordination of both author and illustrator to the solemn purpose of making uniform gray rectangles reduced the "limited edition" to its final absurdity. Technically perfect in every way, the rarest typographic orchid of the many that bloomed during our recent hot spell, it marks the complete realization of an ideal of book-making which we may never (one can hope) see again. It marks too the height of Mr. Kent's technical facility, the extent of his dependence on certain tricks of style, and the measure of his willingness to ignore the mood of even so powerful a writer as Voltaire to make a pretty book for the customers.

These characteristics appear in various forms in the two latest Kent editions. The drawings for the Shakespeare show an extraordinary lack of interest in the poem; they are completely without feeling or movement and are thoroughly stiff and conventionalized. They include all of the poetry stock pictures: chastely recumbent couples, neatly pruned trees, deer trained to a special gait, and many other familiar devices of the "decorative" (or greeting-card) school of art. They are printed in two colours, although drawn in a silhouette-and-outline style more effective in black and white. They look almost as though the second colour was an afterthought; certainly they are cheapened rather than enriched by it.

Of the typography, little more can be said. The Lutetia type was a happy selection, but the stanzas crowd the cuts and are too widely spaced on the other pages (a fault easily avoided when both stanzas and blocks are so exactly uniform), while the repeated centering of the latter becomes extremely monotonous. The delicate title page, by itself a fine piece of design, is out of scale with the rest of the book, the French fold of the pages is clumsy and unnecessary, and the binding, in boudoir colors and fabrics, is extravagantly impractical.

The *Beowulf* is a very different sort of thing. To begin with it depends very little, for interest, on Mr. Kent's eight lithographs. Without illustrations it would be an extraordinarily handsome and provocative piece of

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printing. It suggests the mood and period of the ancient poems, and yet is firmly stamped with the mark of the time in which it has been made. The hand of the modern man is everywhere apparent—in the drawing of the type, in the texture of the paper, in the colours of the inks, the character of the press-work, and the weaving of the binding cloth.

The Hammer Uncial type is based on the half-uncial alphabets of the seventh century, and so is especially appropriate for this book. It has been liberally leaded, and is surprisingly easy to read. The pages are enriched by blue and red initials, and the prose paraphrases are printed in the same red. The whole has originality and freshness, combined with a befitting dignity and magnificence seldom attained by modern bookmaking.

The volume differs from most of the Kent books in that it has not been built around the illustrations. Mr. Adler has treated the lithographs frankly (and wisely) as inserts; how wisely may be determined from the title and colophon pages where they have been worked into the typographic scheme. There is an old controversy as to whether *only* wood-blocks, and illustrations having similar typographic qualities, are permissible in books. This reviewer must insist on having no prejudice on the question, but it is certain that in any medium the tricks of Mr. Kent's facile hand would have fallen short of the vigour and freshness of the typography just as his conceptions have missed the vitality and power of the legend. The figures are grotesque—verging almost on the absurd—and for a problem well suited to the usual ruggedness of the lithograph, he has developed a technique of soft shadings and grayed values. The *Beowulf* pictures might have been made for the wall, instead of the book, for all the artist has been restricted in or by his medium.

JOSEPH S. JOSEPHY

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(*Continued from page* 390)

a sort of high priest, calls him "the initiator, who stands nearer to its mystery than the playwright can, and nearer than the actor himself". It is the familiar Craig gospel—prophetic, ecstatic, and pseudo-religious—whose characteristics we have long since learned to recognize.

With Mr. R. Dana Skinner's *Our Changing Theatre* (Dial Press. $3.00) we enter a quieter region, we feel hardly more than the pleasant palpitation of opening night on Forty-second Street. Mr. Skinner, who is the critic on the *Commonweal*, adopts a tone of mildly excited and non-contentious optimism. He says our theatre will be fertilized by contact with Europe, and that inspiration flows from east to west. This view may be accepted as sound enough as far as it goes—at least for the longed-for time when our theatre *is* fertilized. But when Mr. Skinner goes on to compare the War to Make the World Safe for Democracy with the Crusades, and to affirm confidently that we are on the eve of a renaissance of culture comparable to the thirteenth century in France, his optimism grows more than a little bewildered, as though he could hardly see for his tears of joy.

But it is when Mr. Skinner comes to deal specifically with current work that his benevolent fluttering gets frankly out of his control. "I cannot, if I would, make a secret of the fact that I am stage-struck," he disarmingly blushes; and so Mr. Dan Totheroh, the author of *Distant Drums* "has caught as perhaps no other American poet the song in lyric tragedy", and Mr. Maxwell Anderson "has caught Shakespearean tragedy in *Elizabeth the Queen*". In hushed tones he says of Sir James Barrie: "He is more concerned with the stuff visions are made of. It has a way of weaving an endless skein toward eternity. . . ."

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I accepted the challenge. The two articles **appear in the February and March issues of The Writer's Digest**, and the story itself has since been sold for $550.00. In brief, I practice what I preach—**and I am able to do for myself what I offer to do for others.**
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